Author:
Matsuda, Hatsuko

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Direct Speech in Beowulf

Its Formal Presentation and Functions

Direct Speech in *Beowulf*:

Its Formal Presentation and Functions

Hatsuko Matsuda

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Abstract

Direct speech, which represents nearly forty per cent of *Beowulf*, is evidently an important component of this Old English epic poem. It contributes to its narrative in a way very different from that in other Old English poems or in classical epics. This dissertation examines how direct speech is presented and considers its functions in the poem.

The most notable feature in the presentation of direct speech in Old English poems is the use of verbs of speech (*inquits*). In *Beowulf*, sixteen different *inquits* are employed to introduce forty-five passages of direct speech, and they are most likely used in specific senses. Moreover, the repeated use of the *inquit* 'maþelode' seems the poet's own device to indicate that the speeches it introduces have special importance to the narrative.

In *Beowulf*, the onset of direct speech and the resumption of the narrative voice after direct speech are demarcated clearly by linguistic or metrical strategies. While most of them are observable in other Old English poems, the careful uses of switches of verb tense/mood or the metrical line are more noticeable in *Beowulf*. These formal features of direct speech in the poem point to the poet's conscious efforts to make it prominent.

Most of the speeches in *Beowulf* are delivered on public occasions. In those speeches that the verb 'maþelode' introduces, the characters speak as official figures in the community. Their speeches, interacting with what is recounted in the narrative voice, contribute to moving the story forward. Moreover, some speeches serve to verify the actions or events in the narrative voice, which seems to reflect the value that Anglo-Saxons placed on first-hand information. Another significant function of direct speech is to present Beowulf as an ideal hero, who is not only valiant and strong but also wise and gentle.

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents.

Acknowledgements

I am deeply grateful to my supervisors Myra Stokes and Ad Putter for guiding me with patience, generously giving me deep scholarly knowledge and academic advice as well as personal support. I will owe them both a permanent debt of gratitude for their devotion.

My heart-felt gratitude also goes to all the medievalists and staff at the University of Bristol, friends, and my family for their kindness, generosity, support and constant encouragement, which kept me motivated throughout my PhD studies.

Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED: ..... DATE: .....

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Introduction

The proportion of direct speech to narrative in the Old English epic poem *Beowulf* is significant. There are forty-four passages of direct speech – one speech is embedded within a speech by the hero, Beowulf – and the number of lines of direct speech amounts to 1231.5 lines, which comprises 38.7 per cent of the 3182-line poem. It is self-evidently a substantial component of this poem. A comparably large proportion of direct speech is found elsewhere in Old English poems. Elise Louviot states: 'Direct speech is one of the most striking features of Old English narrative poems. Quantitatively speaking, it is hard to miss as it often represents more than one-third of a complete poem and sometimes more than half.'[1] What is unusual about the speeches in *Beowulf* is that twenty-six out of the forty-five speeches are introduced by the verb 'maþelode' [spoke] and eighteen of them are introduced by the whole-line 'maþelode' formula exemplified in line 529: 'Beowulf maþelode, | bearn Ecgþeowes' [Beowulf, son of Ecgtheow, spoke out].[2]

The diction of *Beowulf* is undoubtedly formulaic, and many phrases recur. Nevertheless, as Andy Orchard states, 'relatively few self-contained lines in the poem are recycled verbatim'. He points out that 'such repetition accounts for less than 1 per cent of the lines in *Beowulf* […] nearly half of these whole-verse

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[1] Elise Louviot, *Direct Speech in 'Beowulf' and Other Old English Narrative Poems* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2016), p. 1. She calculates the proportions of direct speech to narrative for some Old English narrative poems (footnote 2, p. 1).

[2] All quotations from *Beowulf* are from *Klaeber's Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, ed. by R. D. Fulk, Robert E. Bjork, and John D. Niles, 4th edn (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008). Indications of vowel length have been omitted and boldface added. Translations of Old English poems are normally from *Anglo-Saxon Poetry,* ed. and trans. by S. A. J. Bradley (London: Everyman, 1982), unless otherwise noted.

repetitions comprise three simple parallel statement: "Beowulf spoke, son of Ecgtheow"'.[3] The frequent use of whole-line formulae is not representative of the poet's style. Why then did he use the 'maþelode' formula repeatedly?

Bosworth-Toller Anglo-Saxon Dictionary (hereinafter abbreviated as *BT*) defines the verb 'maþelian' as 'to speak, harangue, make a speech, declaim'.[4] According to Fred C. Robinson, the verb originally meant 'to make a speech in the presence of an assembled group'.[5] Almost all speeches in *Beowulf* are made in public and formal settings. Therefore, the verb is certainly the most suitable to introduce speeches made on such occasions, and hence it is totally natural that the verb is used so frequently in the poem. But is this the reason why the poet resorted to this particular verb of speech? Along with the verb 'maþelode', the poet uses rather common verbs of speech (also known as *inquits*), such as 'cwæð' [said] or 'spræc' [spoke], to introduce direct speech. It has been pointed out that *Beowulf* has a rich vocabulary, and a good number of words in this poem appear nowhere else.[6] This gives rise to another question: why did the poet not vary his *inquits* when he certainly had more options in stock? In other poems, such *inquits* as 'reodian' or 'mælan' are also commonly used.[7] It seems quite possible that he did this purposefully. If so, what purpose might

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[3] Andy Orchard, *A Critical Companion to 'Beowulf'* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2003), p. 86, and Appendix II: Repeated Formulas in *Beowulf* (pp. 274–314).

[4] *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Based on the Manuscript Collections of the Late Joseph Bosworth*, ed. and enlarged by T. Northcote Toller (London: Oxford University Press, 1898); *Supplement*, by T. Northcote Toller (Oxford: Clarendon, 1921); *Online*, compiled by Sean Crist and Ondřej Tichý et al <http://www.bosworthtoller.com>. Whenever I refer to *BT*, I also consult, where possible, *The Dictionary of Old English: A to I Online*, ed. by Antonette diPaolo Healey, et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto) <https://www.doe.utoronto.ca/pages/index.html>.

[5] Fred C. Robinson, *Beowulf and the Appositive Style* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985) p. 66.

[6] See Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, p. cxii.

[7] In *Beowulf*, the verb of speaking 'reodian' is used once (3025), but it does not introduce direct speech.

this be?

Although the poem has often been conceptualised as focusing on the hero's three great battles with his monstrous adversaries,[8] the poet, in fact, devotes fewer lines to the actual fighting scenes than he does to speeches: Beowulf's fight against Grendel takes 127 lines (710–836); against Grendel's mother, 99 lines (1492–1590); against the dragon, 106.5 lines (2538–2601 and 2669–2711a).[9] The total of 332.5 lines is only 10.5 per cent of the poem. Interestingly, the poet does not use direct speech within the fighting scenes; though Beowulf's enemies are unlikely to speak human language, it would not have been impossible to give the hero a monologue in battle. This seems quite peculiar to the poem. Is it possible that the poet associated direct speech with particular characters or scenes for some narrative effect?

Answering these questions requires a close reading of the poem and related materials from a variety of angles. First, it is necessary to examine the presentation of direct speech in the poem: what lexical, linguistic, or metrical features are observable before and after direct speech. Second, the distribution of direct speech in the narrative also needs taking account of in two respects: for whom direct speech is employed and for what scenes. These two examinations will lead to further consideration of what part direct speech plays in *Beowulf* as regards the relation between direct speech and narrative. This may shed light on how the story of the

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[8] For example, J. Leyerle sees the three battles with the monsters as central to the structural unity of the poem: 'Beowulf the Hero and the King', *Medium Aevum*, 34 (1965), 89–102; Lenore Abraham considers the three battles as 'Beowulf's journey through youth, middle age, and age': 'The Decorum of *Beowulf*', *Philological Quarterly*, 720 (1993), 267–87, (p. 267). See also Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, p. lxxx; Andy Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the 'Beowulf'-Manuscript*, rev. edn (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), p. 28.

[9] These lines are based on Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, pp. xxiii–xxv, though I have omitted lines 2602–68, where the poet introduces Wiglaf, a kinsman of Beowulf, suspending the fight for a while.

poem moves forward.

Almost every aspect of *Beowulf* (the finest poem in the corpus) has been well studied. The speeches in this poem are no exception.[10] However, direct speech, which can be approached in various ways, still leaves much scope for exploration even in such a famous poem as *Beowulf*. In fact, the relationship between the *inquit* formulae and the speeches they introduce remains under-researched.[11] As far as existing criticism is concerned, I will be engaging with it in my chapters when it is relevant to my argument, but for the purposes of this general introduction I would like to single out three broad studies of the topic.

Louviot's recent book, *Direct Speech in Beowulf and Other Old English Narrative Poems*, as the title indicates, treats some topics that are similar to mine in this dissertation.[12] However, her major concern is 'the norms' of direct speech in Old English narrative poems: 'The aim of this book is to reassess past scholarship on

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[10] Some notable studies are: Louviot, *Direct Speech*; the section 'Speeches' in Introduction of Fulk, Bjork, and Niles (pp. lxxxvi–lxxxviii); Chapter 7 ('Words and Deeds') of Orchard's *Companion* (pp. 203–37); T. A. Shippey, 'Principles of Conversation in Beowulfian Speech', in *Techniques of Description: Spoken and written discourse: A festschrift for Malcolm Coulthard*, ed. by John M. Sinclair, Michael Hoey, and Gwyneth Fox (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 109–26; Brian A. Shaw, 'The Speeches in *Beowulf*: A Structural Study', *The Chaucer Review,* 13 (1978), 86–92; Charles R. Dahlberg, '*Beowulf* and the Land of Unlikeness', *The City University of New York English Forum*, 1 (1985), pp. 105–27; Peter S. Baker, 'Beowulf the Orator', *Journal of English Linguistics*, 21 (1988), 3–23; Robert E. Bjork, 'Speech as Gift in Beowulf', *Speculum*, 69 (1994), 993–1022. There are also PhD theses on direct speech in *Beowulf*: R. Levine, 'Direct Discourse in *Beowulf*: Its Meaning and Function' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1963); C. E. McNally, '"Beowulf maþelode": Text Linguistics and Speech Acts' (unpublished doctoral thesis, State University of New York, Binghamton, 1975); L. C. Perelman, 'The Conditions, Consequences, and Structure of Direct Discourse in *Beowulf*: A Study of Speech Acts' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Massachusetts, 1981); Dong-Ill Lee, 'Character from Archetype: A Study of the Characterization of Beowulf with Reference to the Diction of Direct Speech in *Beowulf*' (London: University College London, 1996).

[11] R. W. McConchie examines the relation between 'mathelode' and the speeches which it introduces in *Beowulf*: 'The Use of the Verb maþelian in *Beowulf*', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 99 (1998), 59–68.

[12] Her book was published after I had started my PhD studies.

Direct Speech in Old English poetry from a broader perspective in order to determine the norms of Direct Speech in that particular tradition.'[13] She mainly discusses characteristics of direct speech in Old English narrative poems as a body. As she demonstrates in her book, direct speech in *Beowulf* in fact shares most of such characteristics with other Old English poems. Since my concern is to find how the poet uses direct speech in *Beowulf* in particular, our aims themselves are quite different. Nevertheless, her findings are very useful in considering to what extent the formal features of direct speech in *Beowulf* are typical or untypical in comparison with other Old English narrative poems.

In her book, *Quoting Speech in Early English*, Colette Moore extensively investigates the methods of marking direct speech in pre-modern literature, using the *Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse*.[14] For her investigation, she gives special attention to the use of a variety of pragmatic markers (*inquit* formulae, interjections, vocatives, deictic pronouns, or tense switching). While she distinguishes between 'speech internal "perspective shifters"', such as interjections, vocatives, or deictic pronouns, and 'speech external linguistic structure', such as *inquit* formulae, she treats them together as 'direct speech onset markers'.[15] Although I consider that the role of *inquit* formulae is quite different from that of the other markers (see Chapter 2), her methods are useful in examining how direct speech is treated in Old English poems.

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[13] Louviot, *Direct Speech*, p. 23. J. F. G. Weldon also conducts a similar study in his doctoral thesis: 'The Devices of Direct Discourse: Some Aspects of Poetic Organization in Old English Narrative Poetry' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Queen's University at Kingston, Ontario, 1979).

[14] Colette Moore, *Quoting Speech in Early English* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[15] Moore, pp. 43–49.

L. C. Perelman's doctoral thesis also examines direct speech in *Beowulf*.[16] While her main research is on speech acts in the poem on the basis of John R. Searle's taxonomy, some of her research overlap with mine.[17] She conducts in one chapter a similar examination on the distribution of direct speech. She thinks that *Beowulf* portrays a society, and she compares the speeches in *Beowulf* with those in a modern courtroom where only specific people are given the floor. She argues that the allocation of direct speech in the epic is determined by social or moral status; only those 'closely connected, either by birth or official position, to the institution of the Anglo-Saxon kingship' are allowed to speak; the monsters are not allowed to speak because of their moral status; and she regards the so-called Last Survivor as a king.[18] These criteria, however, do not fit some characters well, such as Unferth or the scop, to whom she gives further different interpretations. Her criteria do not explain why Beowulf's speeches are sometimes put in indirect speech, either. As for the scop's songs, assuming *Beowulf* was orally performed, she claims that it would be very difficult for the performer to impersonate Hrothgar's scop, because 'he cannot manifest himself as another singer since he has already pre-empted that position'.[19] Her supposition is not very convincing as we do not know whether the role of oral singers in the royal court in epics and that of the performers of epic poems was the same, and it is not uncommon that characters in epics narrate their adventures using direct speech (see below).

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[16] L. C. Perelman, 'The Conditions, Consequences, and Structure of Direct Discourse in Beowulf: A Study of Speech Acts' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Massachusetts, 1981), pp. 18–49.
[17] See John R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969).
[18] Perelman, p. 26.
[19] Perelman, pp. 38–41.

In the first two chapters, I shall examine the way in which the *Beowulf* poet introduces direct speech. In Chapter 1, I shall focus on the poet's use of verbs of speech which alert us to a coming speech – the most obvious signal for direct speech. I shall analyse in turn all the *inquits* and periphrastic expressions (such as 'wordhord onleac' [unlocked a word-hoard]) serving as *inquits* and the reasons for them. In Chapter 2, I shall look at the linguistic and metrical features of the beginnings and ends of the speeches as well as those of the onset of the narrative voice after direct speech. To consider how typical is the way in which the *Beowulf* poet demarcates direct speech from the narrative voice, I shall compare it with other Old English narrative poems which are relatively long and contain a certain amount of direct speech, that is, *Genesis A* and *B*, *Elene*, *Andreas*, and *Juliana*.

In Chapter 3, I shall consider how direct speech is distributed in the poem. I shall first look at direct speech in relation to the metrical line and then examine how passages of direct speech are distributed throughout the poem, taking both situations and speakers into account. In *Beowulf*, direct speech is never used for collective utterances and the scop's songs; for these, indirect speech is used exclusively. Therefore, I shall also consider what different functions the poet might have envisaged for direct speech and indirect speech. The term 'indirect speech' may refer to sentence structures with accusative non-clausal objects (i.e., with an accusative noun: 'sægde him þæs leanes þanc' (1809b) or with accusative + infinitive: 'het hine wel brucan' (1045b)) but in this dissertation, I use it only for the construction which contains a verb of speech governing a nominal clause or clauses, usually led by such words as 'that', 'if' or various interrogatives, as those passages of indirect speech with a clause or clauses are syntactically closer to those of direct

speech.

The scop's songs are put in indirect speech in *Beowulf*, just as those by court singers are in the classical epics, the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid*. Since *Beowulf* is the only Old English poem with a heroic subject, I will use them for comparison. Apparently, some aspects of direct speech in *Beowulf* are different from those in the classical epics: most direct discourse in *Beowulf* is restricted to social and public settings, for instance.[20] Personal or private conversation in this poem is infrequent and consequently, the proportion of direct speech is lower than it is in the others: direct speech in the *Odyssey* constitutes 67.9 per cent; in the *Aeneid*, 46.8 per cent.[21] As has been noted, however, *Beowulf* shares some narrative elements with both the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid*.[22] The protagonists arrive at foreign lands and tell their former adventures in royal courts there: Beowulf in Hrothgar's royal hall, Odysseus in the palace of Alcinous (Books 9–12), and Aeneas in Dido's land (Books 2 and 3). Court singers also appear in each poem. Some aspects of the classical epics are thus comparable with those of *Beowulf*.

In the last two chapters, I shall consider the role of direct speech in the poem, on the basis of what I have found in the previous chapters. In Chapter 4, I shall examine each speech or sequence of speeches, on the basis of the findings described in Chapter 1, focusing on the relation between *inquits* and the contents of the speeches. I will look at the speeches in turn, dividing them into three groups according to the *inquits* used: those introduced by 'frægn' and 'andswarode', those by 'maþelode', and those by 'cwæð', 'spræc' and 'sægde'. I will show that the verbs of speech match the contents

[20] Louviot sees 39 speeches in *Beowulf* as public: *Direct speech*, p. 77.
[21] My calculations are based on Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, footnote 4, p. lxxxvi.
[22] See below footnote 41 in Chapter 3.

of the speeches to such an extent as to characterise them. In Chapter 5, I shall consider the relationship between direct speech and the narrative voice, taking account of the findings obtained in Chapters 2 and 3. I will show how direct speech in *Beowulf* interacts with the events or actions recounted in the narrative voice throughout the poem.

The overarching argument that runs through the separate chapters is that the poet, while following certain norms in the tradition, uses direct speech in a way very different from that of other Old English poems and that it plays a key role in presenting Beowulf's character and his life.

Chapter 1

The verbs of speech in *Beowulf*

Introduction

There are some set expressions to introduce direct speech in Old English poems.[1] One of the most well-known lines is probably the 'maþelode' formula frequently used in *Beowulf*: 'Beowulf maþelode, | bearn Ecgþeowes' [Beowulf spoke, son of Ecgtheow]. This formula is used eighteen times in the poem. Another is the 'answarode' formula. A typical line found in *Beowulf* is: 'Him þa ellenrof | andswarode' [Then the brave one answered him] (340). Though no other example of the full-line 'maþelode' formula is found in the corpus outside the epic poem, the 'andswarode' formula (a dative pronoun referring to the addressee(s) + the subject, followed by the *inquit*) is often used in other poems, such as *Genesis A* or *Daniel*: 'Him þa ædre god |andswarode' [Then God immediately answered him] (*Genesis A* 2187).[2] These *inquit* formulae, particularly those in *Beowulf*, have attracted scholarly attention. Paule Mertens-Fonch, for example, analyses the passages introducing direct speech in *Beowulf* and examines what information they present.[3] Albert B. Lord also analyses them in the light of the formulaic structures and patterns of the *inquit* formulae in *Beowulf* and *Elene*.[4] Because the *inquit* 'maþelode' is so frequently used in *Beowulf*, this verb

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[1] See Louviot, *Direct Speech*, pp. 48–49.
[2] All quotations from *Genesis* are from *Genesis A: A New Edition*, ed. by A. N. Doane (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978) and *The Saxon Genesis: An Edition of the West Saxon 'Genesis B' and the Old Saxon Vatican 'Genesis'*, ed. by A. N. Doane (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991). This translation is mine, as Bradley does not translate after line 1543.
[3] Paule Mertens-Fonck, 'Structure des passages introduisant le discours direct dans *Beowulf*', in *Mélanges de philologie et de littératures romanes offerts à Jeanne Wathelet-Willem*, ed. by Jacques de Caluwé (Liège: Cahiers de l'A. R. U. Lg., 1978), 433–45.
[4] Albert B. Lord, *Epic Singers and Oral Tradition* (London: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 147–69.

alone has also interested such scholars as Matti Rissanen or R. W. McConchie (see below and Chapter 4).[5]

T. A. Shippey states that 'speeches in *Beowulf* are not introduced by explanatory verbs like *exhorted*, *explained*, *warned*, *claimed*, but by such relatively opaque expressions as *frægn*, *maþelode*, *word cwæð*, *word abead* or, suggestive but uninformative as regards discourse, *wordhord onleac*'.[6] This statement also seems true of other Old English poems, as 'explanatory verbs' are not used so often in them, either.[7] However, some Old English poems have a more variety of verbs of speech than *Beowulf*. In *Elene*, a hagiographic poem with 1,321 lines, for example, there are some *inquits* which are not used in *Beowulf*, such as 'reodian', 'mælan', 'negan', 'þingian', 'oncweðan' or 'mælde'. This seems to contradict the richness of the diction of the epic poem, exemplified the poet's use of compounds.[8] In this chapter, I will examine all the verbs of speech which introduce direct speech in *Beowulf* and consider how they might have been chosen by the poet. Although they are certainly not 'explanatory', it seems that they have specific senses and their meanings are not so 'opaque'. Arthur Gilchrist Brodeur observes about the poet's use of compounds: '[…] the compounds of *Beowulf* tend to be relatively specific. Over all, the compounds in *Beowulf* are used with more precision, and with more restraint, than those of most other poems.'[9] I hope to demonstrate that the same thing is true of the poet's use of *inquits*.

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[5] Matti Rissanen, '*Maþelian* in Old English Poetry', in *Words and Works: Studies in Medieval English Language and Literature in Honour of Fred C. Robinson*, ed. by Peter S. Baker and Nicholas Howe (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), pp. 159–72; R. W. McConchie, 'The Use of the Verb maþelian in *Beowulf*', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 99 (1998), 59–68. See also Albert Stanburrough Cook, 'The Beowulfian Maðelode', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 25 (1926), 1–6.

[6] Shippey, 'Principles', p. 109.

[7] In *Elene*, some explanatory verbs, such as 'cleopian' [to cry], 'herian' [to praise], or hleoðrian [exclaim], are used to introduce direct speech.

[8] See particularly Arthur Gilchrist Brodeur, *The Art of 'Beowulf'* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), pp. 7–38, and 254–71.

[9] Brodeur, *Art*, p. 270.

There are sixteen different *inquits* used for the forty-five speeches in *Beowulf*. Each speech is introduced by one *inquit* or two. In ten cases, two *inquits* are used, for example, 'Wealhðeo **maþelode**; | heo fore þæm werede **spræc'** [Wealhtheow spoke out and in the presence of that great assembly said] (1215). For most speeches, one of the common *inquits* is used, namely 'frignan', 'andswarian', 'maþelian', '-cweðan', '-sprecan', and 'secgan'. In what follows, I will look at those *inquits* in turn, first the verbs of asking and answering ('frægn', 'andswarode', and 'ongan… fricgcean'), then the famous 'maþelode', the common *inquits* ('cwæð', 'acwyð', 'spræc', 'gespræc', and 'sægde'), the other minor verbs ('abead', 'gegrette', and 'het') and the periphrases ('wordhord onleac', 'onband beadurune', 'gyd … wræc', and 'wordes ord breosthord þurhbræc'). Note that all speeches are made by a single person since no collective utterances are put in direct speech in the poem. All the verbs are therefore in third-person singular preterite forms, except for 'cwið' (2041a) and 'acwyð' (2046b), which are both the present tense of '-cweðan', used to introduce an embedded speech (2047–56) narrated by Beowulf, who is talking about an event yet to come.

'Frægn', 'andswarode' and 'ongan… fricgcean'

As Shippey points out, interrogatives are rarely used in the speeches in *Beowulf*.[10] This corresponds to the scarcity in the poem of verbs of asking; there are only three instances of them which introduce direct speech. The verb 'frægn' [asked] (236 and 332) is employed only twice to introduce direct speech in the poem and, predictably, the verb 'andswarode' [answered] (258 and 340) is also employed twice to introduce an answer to the questions introduced by 'frægn'. Another verb of asking, 'fricgan', with the ingressive verb 'ongan' is used only once and the answer is not introduced by a verb of answering but by 'maþelode'. The phrase 'ongan… fricgcean' [began to

[10] Shippey, 'Principles', p.119.

ask] (1983b-85a) is the only instance in which that combination (the ingressive verb 'onginnan' + infinitive) is used to introduce direct speech in the poem. I will examine the paired verbs 'frægn' and 'andswarode' first and proceed to 'ongan… fricgcean'.

'Frægn' and 'andswarode'

The combination of the verbs of asking ('frægn') and answering ('andswarode') appears in the first two dialogues between Beowulf and the Danish officials. The *Beowulf* poet seems to have chosen these *inquits* carefully in order that they 'demonstrate clear echoes', as Orchard puts it.[11] The very first passage of direct speech in this poem is introduced by 'frægn' when the Danish Coastguard questions Beowulf and his companions, who have just arrived at the coast of the Danes:

> Gewat him þa to waroðe wicge ridan
> þegn Hroðgares, þrymmum cwehte
> mægenwudu mundum, meþelwordum **frægn**:
> 'Hwæt syndon ge searohæbbendra…' (234–37)
>
> [Hrothgar's thane, then, went riding down to the shore on horseback, forcefully brandished the sturdy wooden shaft in his hands and demanded with formal words: 'What sort of armour-bearing men are you…']

The hero's reply is introduced by 'andswarode' with another appositive *inquit* 'wordhord onleac':

[11] Orchard, *Companion*, p. 208. See also Bjork, 'Speech as Gift', pp. 1008–12; Shippey, 'Principles', pp. 119–22; Weldon, pp. 83–88.

Him se yldesta **andswarode**,

werodes wisa, **wordhord onleac**:

'We synt gumcynnes Geata leode …' (258–60)

[The chief, the leader of the contingent, answered him and opened a treasury of words: 'We are by extraction out of the Geatich people …']

Likewise, the verb 'frægn' is used the second time to introduce the speech by the Danish herald Wulfgar, when the band of the young Geats arrives at Heorot, the royal hall of the king Hrothgar:

Þa ðær wlonc hæleð

oretmecgas æfter æ*þel*um **frægn**:

'Hwanon ferigeað ge fætte scyldas …' (331b–33)[12]

[There a proud and mettlesome man next questioned those campaigners about their parentage. 'From where do you come conveying gold-ornamented shields …']

The verb 'andswarode' again introduces Beowulf's response to his question with another apositive *inquit* 'word æfter spræc':

Him þa ellenrof **andswarode**,

wlanc Wedera leod, word æfter **spræc**

heard under helme: 'We synt Higelaces

beodgeneatas …' (340–43a)

[The proud leader of the Weder-Geats, renowned for his valour, answered;

[12] 'Italics indicate alteration of words by emendation': Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, p. 2.

looking stern in his helmets, he said these words in reply: 'We are the companions of Hygelac, sharer of his table...']

This combination of the *inquits* in both scenes is closely parallel, especially because the same verbs appear in the same metrical position, that is, at the end of the long line.

Those introductions to direct speech are not simply repetitive. The structures of these passages containing 'frægn' are quite different.[13] The verb introducing the Coastguard's speech is the third in the clause expressing his consecutive acts: 'Gewat' 'cwehte', and 'frægn'. The clause is made up of three long lines. 'Frægn' introducing Wulfgar's speech, on the other hand, is the only verb. It has one long line and a half-line.

The verb 'frægn' in the corpus does not always appear in the final position of the b-verse. *A Concordance to the Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* (herein after *Concordance*) records fourteen instances of the verb 'frægn'; seven of them introduce direct speech.[14] Although four of the seven instances, including the two in *Beowulf*, are placed in the final position, three are not. In *Genesis A*, there are three instances of this verb and their metrical positions are all different:

Ða ðæs euan **frægn** ælmihtig god (887)

[Then the almighty God questioned Eve about it]

Abraham þa andswarode,

[13] See Lord, *Epic Singers*, pp. 152–54. He also analyses the structures of the passages, though he does not specifically compare those containing 'frægn'.

[14] *A Concordance to the Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, ed. by J. B. Bessinger and program. by Philip H. Smith (New York: Cornell University Press, 1978).

dædrof, drihtne sinum. **frægn** hine dægrime frod (2173–74)

[Then Abraham, deed-famed, answered his lord, and the wise in number of days asked him][15]

þær hie wuldres þegn

engel drihtnes an gemitte

geomormode. se hie georne **frægn** (2268b–71)

[there the thane of glory, an angel of the Lord, met her alone, sad of heart, and he eagerly asked her]

Likewise, in *Andreas*, there are two instances of the verb and their metrical positions differ:

Him ða of ceole oncwæð cyninga wuldor,

frægn fromlice fruma ond ende (555–56)

[The Glory of kings, the Beginning and the End, then answered him from the ship and forthrightly asked]

Feoll þa to foldan, frioðo wilnode

wordum wis hæleð, winedryhten **frægn** (918–19)[16]

[The wise man fell to the ground then and supplicated in words for peace and asked his friend and Lord]

[15] Translations of *Genesis A* after line 1542 are mine as Bradley does not translate it thereafter.

[16] All quotations from *Andreas* are from *The Vercelli Book*, ed. by George Philip Krapp (London: George Routledge, 1932).

This suggests that Anglo-Saxon poets could use the verb freely as regards the metrical line. It is therefore possible that the *Beowulf* poet carefully placed the *inquit* 'frægn' in the position immediately before the start of the direct question in order to make a pattern of the first two dialogues.

The passages which introduce Beowulf's answer to the Danes are syntactically more similar: both have a formulaic long line with 'andswarode' ('Him se yldesta | andswarode' and 'Him þa ellenrof | andswarode') which is followed by a parallel variation of the subject and of the *inquit* ('werodes wisa, | wordhord onleac' and 'wlanc Wedera leod, | word æfter spræc'). The lengths of the appositive clauses are different, however: the former consists of two half-lines, while the latter consists of three half-lines. Moreover, the substantives referring to the hero denote different features of him. I will quote the passages again:

Him se yldesta **andswarode**,
werodes wisa, wordhord onleac (258–59)

Him þa ellenrof **andswarode**,
wlanc Wedera leod, word æfter spræc
heard under helme (340–42a)

In the first passage, the role of the hero among the band is expressed twice in parallel variation: the chief ('se yldesta') and the leader of the company ('werodes wisa'). In the second, on the other hand, the substantives convey his impressiveness: brave ('ellenrof'), proud ('wlanc'), and hard or stern ('heard'). These words seem to reflect the enquirers' impressions on the Geats. The Coastguard says that he has never seen a 'maran' [greater] (247b) nobleman, singling the hero out, perhaps assuming that

he is the chief, while Wulfgar refers to the Geats as 'modiglicran' [more brave-looking] (337b) warriors than he has ever met.

Although it seems very natural that the *inquits* ('frægn' and 'andswarode') are used as a pair in *Beowulf*, such instances are rather rare in the corpus.[17] The verb 'andswarode' is much more frequently used in Old English poetry as an *inquit* than 'frægn'. *Concordance* records thirty-two instances of 'andswarode' including the variants 'andswarede', 'ondswarode' and 'ondswarude'.[18] All of them, except one instance in *Daniel* (210), are used to introduce direct speech. The line containing 'andswarode' in *Beowulf* shares the pattern with other poems, as mentioned above. Therefore, the line may have been a traditional formula. However, this is not the only formula used to introduce an answer in Old English poems; there are other common patterns. One has the verb in the a-verse: 'Him **andswarode** | ealwalda god' [Ominipotent God answered him] (*Andreas* 925). This pattern is used eight times in *Andreas* (202, 260, 277, 290, 343, 510, 623 and 925), twice in *Christ and Satan* (673 and 689), and once in *Daniel* (210). Another pattern has the phrase 'ageaf andsware' [gave answer] – a phrase which does not appear in *Beowulf* – instead of the single verb. This pattern is used twenty-two times in the corpus. A typical example is 'Him þa seo eadge | **ageaf ondsware** [Then the blessed one gave him her reply] (*Juliana* 105)[19]. The 'andswarode' formula used in *Beowulf* is by no means the only choice available to the poet to introduce an answer.

Now let me consider the meaning of the *inquit* 'frægn'. There are some noticeable narrative similarities in the first two dialogues: both Danish men have to question the hero in their official capacity in order to perform their duties properly.[20] The

[17] The instances are lines 896, 1005, and 2273 in *Genesis A*, and line 134 in *Daniel*.
[18] 15 instances in *Genesis A*, 8 in *Andreas*, 3 in *Daniel*, 2 in *Beowulf*, 2 in *Christ and Satan*, 1 in *Genesis B*, and 1 in *Guthlac*.
[19] All quotations from *Juliana* are from *The Exeter Book*, ed. by George Philip Krapp and Elliott van Kirk Dobbie (London: George Routledge, 1936).
[20] Weldon also analyses the use of the *inquits* in the first two dialogues and asserts

Coastguard questions the Geats who have just landed in Denmark. He needs to know who they are and why they have come to his country: it is of the utmost importance for him to establish whether the band of armed warriors is hostile or friendly. He does not act from a personal interest even though the phrase 'hine fyrwyt bræc' – *BT* translates it as 'curiosity urged him' – is used, prior to the above-cited passage to introduce the Coastguard's first speech:

hine fyrwyt bræc

modgehygdum, hwæt þa men wæron. (232b–33)

[An urgency to know what men these might be obsessed his thoughts.]

Shippey examines the passages in which the word is used in *Beowulf* and considers that the definition 'curiosity' does not suit all the situations. The word appears three times in the same expression in *Beowulf*. One is used in the passage which introduces Hygelac's speech. When the hero has returned to his country, the young king asks him how his adventures went:

hyne fyrwet bræc,

hwylce Sæ-Geata siðas wæron (1985b–86)

[his curiosity overcame him, as to what the Sea-Geats' experiences had been]

The other is used for Wiglaf, who has been asked to bring treasure from the hoard of the dragon by the dying Beowulf; he hurrys back to his king:

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that 'frægn' in both situations has the same meaning with 'gefrægn' [learned by asking], but it is unlikely since it would not serve as a verb of asking (pp. 87–88).

hyne fyrwet bræc,

hwæðer collenferð cwicne gemette
in ðam wongstede Wedra þeoden
ellensiocne, þær he hine ær forlet. (2784b–87)

[An urgency obsessed him, bold-hearted man, to know whether he would find the prince of the Weder-Geats, stricken through doing deeds of courage, alive in the open place where he had lately left him.]

Shippey states: "'Curiosity" seems a callous word here. "Anxiety" would be better, but that would not fit the completely relaxed enquiry of Hygelac, or even the tense but fearless figure of the coastguard.'[21] It seems that the word 'fyrwet' is used in *Beowulf* as a more generic term to denote a strong feeling of needing to know and its meaning is not exactly the same as that of the modern English word 'curiosity'. The situation makes it clear, however, that the Coastguard does not talk to the Geats out of sheer curiosity, even if he is personally curious about the newcomers. Likewise, Wulfgar questions them at the entrance to the Danish royal hall Heorot as a herald of Hrothgar. It is similarly his duty to question any unexpected visitors to the hall to establish what type of people they are so as to carry a proper message, or offer good advice, to his king. Thus, in *Beowulf*, 'frægn' is used when the enquirer genuinely needs the answer to his question so that he may take the next action accordingly. The answer affects his decision: the speaker does not ask questions out of mere curiosity or to satisfy his inward inquisitiveness (see Chapter 4). Note this does not apply to Hygelac, whose speech is not introduced by 'frægn' (see below).

There are three more instances of the verb 'frignan' in *Beowulf*, which do not introduce direct speech. They can also be considered to have the same sense as the

[21] T. A. Shippey, *Beowulf* (London: Edward Arnold, 1978), pp. 15–16.

instances above. Two of them are used within speeches, and one in the narrative voice is used to introduce an indirect question. The first one appears in the speech by Wulfgar. He says to the Geats, in answering Beowulf:

'Ic þæs wine Deniga,
frean Scildinga, **frinan** wille …' (350b–51)
['I will consult the friend of the Danes, the ruler of the Scyldings …']

Here the infinitive 'frinan' (a variant of 'frignan') is used. Wulfgar says this because he, as the herald, needs to ask the king; he does not have choices. The second one is used to introduce indirect speech when Beowulf meets Hrothgar after the attack by Grendel's mother. The hero, having been called for:

frægn gif him wære
æfter neodlaðu[m] niht getæse. (1319b–20)[22]
[He asked whether, in view of the urgent summons, his night had passed agreeably.]

What Beowulf exactly asks here is controversial, since the meaning of 'neodlaðu' does not have scholarly consensus; beside the translation above ('urgent summons'), other interpretations, such as 'invitation to pleasure', have been suggested.[23] Fulk examines the parallel instances of the Old Norse cognate of the word 'laðu' in Eddic poems and also considers the Gothic equivalent, saying that '*neodlaðu* very likely

[22] 'Letters or words added by emendation are enclosed in square brackets': Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, p. 2.
[23] See R. D. Fulk, 'Some Lexical Problems in the Interpretation and Textual Criticism of *Beowulf* (Verses 414a, 845b, 986a, 1320a, 1375a)', *Studia Neophilologica*, 77 (2005), 145–55 (pp. 149–50).

means “that which is agreeable with one’s desires”, and *æfter neodlaðu[m]* “in accordance with his desire”’. Whatever meaning the word has, the situation would make it clear that Beowulf does not intend to exchange ordinary morning greetings with the king, since he has been summoned urgently: ‘Hraþe wæs to bure | Beowulf fetod’ [Hastily Beowulf … was fetched to the bedchamber] (1310). It seems tactful for the hero not to ask bluntly what is now troubling the king. He has come to Denmark to help Hrothgar after all; it may be seen as his duty to remove any trouble the king might have. The third instance, the singular imperative ‘frin’ of ‘frignan’ with a negative adverb ‘ne’, is used in Hrothgar’s response to Beowulf’s above question: ‘Ne frin þu æfter sælum!’ [Do not ask after matters of weal] (1322a). Having summoned Beowulf, the king naturally expects him to ask the reason and is ready to tell it to him. The negative imperative seems to embody the disturbed mind of Hrothgar as well as to imply that an awful event has actually happened. It is worth noting that Hrothgar’s reply to Beowulf’s question is not introduced by ‘andswarode’ but ‘maþelode’. The king’s intention is not just to reply, that is, to tell Beowulf if his night had passed agreeably, but to inform him of the attack by Grendel’s mother and to indicate the inappropriateness to the situation of Beowulf’s own question. In all the cases in which the verb ‘frignan’ is employed, answer is needed for the questioners to take the right actions.

‘Ongan … fricgcean’

The periphrasis ‘ongan … fricgcean’ is used to introduce Hygelac’s only speech in the poem:

Higelac **ongan**

sinne geseldan in sele þam hean

fægre **fricgcean**; hyne fyrwet bræc,

hwylce Sæ-Geata siðas wæron (1983b–86)

[Hygelac began courteously to question his companion in that lofty hall: his curiosity overcame him, as to what the Sea-Geats' experiences had been]

Although the ingressive verb 'onginnan' is frequently used with an infinitive verb in *Beowulf* (14 times), this is the only instance which introduces direct speech. The reason why the poet uses the phrase 'ongan … fricgcean' here, not the simple preterite form of 'fricgcean', to introduce the young king's speech, might be to make Hygelac's state of mind explicit, marking a change of his tone. Before I consider this question further, however, I need to mention the preceding passage, which can be read in two different ways and may be relevant to my discussion.

After Beowulf and his companions have safely landed in their own country, they march to Hygelac's dwelling, and the news of their return swiftly reaches the king (1970b–74), who orders his hall to be prepared to welcome them (1975–76). When they arrive:

Gesæt þa wið sylfne se ða sæcce genæs,

mæg wið mæge, syððan mandryhten

þurh hleoðorcwyde holdne gegrette,

meaglum wordum. (1977–1980a)

[So the one who had survived the strife was seated beside the ruler himself, kinsman besides kinsman, after he had greeted his gracious lord with imposing words in a formal speech.]

Grammatically, the word 'mandryhten' can be nominative as well as accusative.

Bradley's translation shows that he takes the word 'mandryhten' as accusative, and thus the subject of 'gegrette' is Beowulf, though unexpressed. Klaeber also regards it as accusative; he claims that 'it is Beowulf's part to greet the king in a solemn address', referring to Beowulf's speech in lines 407 to 455, where the young warrior greets the king Hrothgar first.[24] Bruce Mitchell and Robinson, on the other hand, consider it as nominative, explaining that '[t]he king greets his loyal retainer, inviting him to take the seat of honour'.[25] It is Beowulf, as Klaeber points out, that speaks to Hrothgar first when he has been invited to Heorot for the first time, but then it is after the king has welcomed Beowulf and his companions in words (457–90) that they take seats (491–94a). At Hygelac's court, Beowulf is not a stranger and does not have to introduce himself to his own king, so it seems equally possible that the king is the first to speak to welcome them, and hence to take 'mandryhten' as nominative. If the word is nominative, the passage after 'syððan' could be translated: 'after the liege lord greeted his loyal thane with solemn words in a ceremonious speech'. (Or it may be possible that these lines are made ambiguous to imply that both Beowulf and Hygelac are mutually loyal and gracious.) In either case, the welcoming feast has, without doubt, started with a formal speech by either Beowulf or Hygelac – a speech between men in their formal roles of a loyal thane and a gracious lord – and then the king starts to ask Beowulf how his adventures went in the land of Danes. This speech sounds less ceremonious and more personal, explicitly showing the king's real, as opposed to polite, curiosity about Beowulf's exploits. Here 'curiosity' fits well as the meaning of the word 'fyrwet'. The periphrasis 'ongan … fricgcean' thus serves to mark a shift in a mode of speaking in the hall. I am inclined

[24] See Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, note on 1978b f., p. 228; *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, ed. by Fr. Klaeber, 3rd edn with 1st and 2nd supplements (Lexington: Heath, 1950), note on 1978 f., p. 201.
[25] See *Beowulf: An Edition with Relevant Shorter Texts*, ed. by Bruce Mitchell, and Fred C. Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998; repr. 2000), note on 1978, p. 115.

to think that the subject of 'gegrette' is Hygelac, which would make the phrase more effective, serving not only to change gears, but also to intensify his inquisitiveness: Hygelac, who has already made a formal speech to welcome Beowulf and his companions, starts to ask questions more informally to satisfy his curiosity as soon as drinks have been served (1980b–83a), because he is very eager to hear Beowulf's adventures. This interpretation would allow us to presume that the king's curiosity has been already shaped in his mind before it bursts.

The poet, in fact, sometimes uses the verb 'ongan' + infinitive to mark the onset of the action which is apparently triggered by a preceding event. Grendel does not start to attack Heorot out of the blue, for example. The cheerful noise from the hall annoys him to the point that he cannot endure it any longer:

> Ða se ellengæst earfoðlice
> þrage geþolode, se þe in þystrum bad,
> þæt he dogora gehwam dream gehyrde
> hludne in healle.
> …
> Swa ða drihtguman dreamum lifdon,
> eadiglice, oð ðæt an ongan
> fyrene fre(m)man feond on helle (86–101)[26]

[Then that obdurate being – the one which waited in places of darkness – suffered tormentedly for a time because each single day he heard the loud noise of happiness in the hall … So the men of that community lived happily,

[26] 'Round brackets (parentheses) are used when the conjecturally inserted letters correspond to letters of the MS which on account of its damaged condition are missing or illegible and were so when the Thorkelin transcripts were made': Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, p. 2.

blessedly, until one being, a fiend in torment, began to perpetrate outrages.]

Another similar example is found within a speech by Beowulf, where he predicts how the feud between the Danes and the Heathobards would be renewed. The sight of their own lord's heirlooms worn by a Dane causes an old Heathobard to arouse his young companion's hatred of the Danes: the old warrior 'onginneð … geong(um) cempan / þurh hreðra gehygd | higes cunnian, / wigbealu weccean' [sets out to try the young soldier's temper and provoke some evil act of war by the thoughts from out of his breast] (2044–46b). In both cases, there are causes which make them go beyond the limits of their patience: the merry sound from Heorot and the sight of their treasure looted by the Danes.

The use of the phrase 'fricgean ongann' in *Genesis A* may be closely parallel to that in *Beowulf*.[27] Towards the end of the poem, God tests Abraham, telling him to sacrifice his only son Isaac as a burnt offering. The loyal servant takes his son to the place God has told him about, and they prepare to offer a sacrifice to God:

wudu bær sunu,
fæder fyr and sweord. Ða þæs fricgean ongann
wer wintrum geong wordum abraham (2887b–89)

[The son carried wood, the father fire and sword. Then the man, young in years, began to question Abraham in words]

Isaac innocently asks his father where the sacrifice is. I suppose that the reason why the phrase is used here, instead of the simple preterite form of 'fricgean', is the same

[27] On the relation between *Beowulf* and *Genesis A*, see Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, pp. clxxiv–clxxv; Orchard, *Companions*, p.167.

in *Beowulf*; it is to imply that during the preparation of the sacrifice, Isaac has already been wondering, and when his curiosity has culminated, he starts to ask. In the case of Hygelac, 'ongan' also signals the culmination of his curiosity. The phrase can thus function to reveal the psychology of the speaker; his action is not driven by a thought well planned beforehand, but by a spontaneous feeling.

Furthermore, it can be pointed out that, unlike the Danish officials, neither Hygelac nor Isaac is under any obligation to ask questions. *BT* defines 'frignan' as 'to ask, inquire', while it lists, as the definition of 'fricgan', 'to ask, inquire, question, find out, seek after, or learn'. This suggests that 'fricgan' is a more generic verb of asking in poetry than 'frignan'.[28] In *Beowulf*, 'frignan' seems to be used when the speaker requires his addressee's answer to his question. It is possible that the poet distinguished between the two verbs of asking 'frignan' and 'fricgcean' in meaning though the instances are certainly too scarce to be sure.

To sum up, although the same set of verbs of speech is used for the first two dialogues, we are not dealing with the kind of simple repetition that is often seen in folk tales; the structures of the passages which introduce direct speech in the two dialogues are not very comparable. What contributes to 'clear echoes' in this pair of dialogues seems to lie in the poet's careful arrangement of the *inquits* in the metrical line. In addition, it may be said that the poet uses the verb 'frignan' in a specific sense, not as a synonymous verb of 'fricgean'.

[28] The verb 'fricgan' is found in poetry only. See Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, Glossary, p. 343 and p. 380.

'Maþelode'

The *Beowulf* poet's use of the verb 'maþelian' [speak, make a speech] is conspicuous. Unlike other verbs of speech, such as 'cweðan' [say, speak] or 'sprecan' [speak], in *Beowulf*, the word 'maþelian' is considered a poetic word by editors of the poem, though its use is not strictly limited to poetry.[29] As McConchie shows, this verb 'maþelian' has some peculiar features. It is always used in the third person singular preterite form 'maþelode', and is also invariably used in the a-verse without an object:[30]

> Hroðgar **maþelode**, helm Scyldinga:
> 'Ic hine cuðe cnihtwesende …' (371–72)

[Hrothgar, protecting lord of the Scyldings, spoke forth: 'I know him when he was a boy ...']

The verb predominates among the verbs of speech in *Beowulf*, being used twenty-six times (see Apendix 1). In other words, more than half of the forty-five speeches in the poem are introduced by this verb. Such speeches amount to 905 lines, comprising 73.5 percent of direct speech in the poem. This fact might lead us to assume that the verb is one of the most frequently used *inquits* in Old English verse. This, however, is not borne out by the corpus; outside *Beowulf*, only eighteen instances of the verb 'maþelode' and the variants 'maþelade' and 'maðolade' are recorded: nine in *Elene*, two in *Genesis A*, two in *Genesis B,* two in *The Battle of Maldon*, one in *Widsith*, one in *Waldere 2*, and one in *Riddle 38*.[31] *Concordance* tells us that some verbs of speech

[29] Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, p. 343 and p. 410. The entry for the word in the glossary is marked with a parenthesized dagger which shows that it or closely-related words are on occasion found in prose.
[30] McConchie, p. 59.
[31] *Concordance*, pp. 780–81.

are employed more frequently in Old English poetry than 'maþelode': 'cwæð' [said, spoke] has 103 instances; 'spræc' [spoke] 67 instances; 'sægde' [said] 56 instances.[32] In *Genesis A* and *B*, which also contain a fair amount of direct discourse – it takes up roughly thirty percent of *Genesis A* and fifty percent of *Genesis B*[33] – 'cwæð' and 'spræc' are much more frequently employed to introduce direct speech: 'cwæð', fourteen times (eleven in *Genesis A* and three in *Genesis B*); 'spræc', sixteen times (twelve in *Genesis A* and four in *Genesis B*). In *The Battle of Maldon*, several verbs of speech, along with 'maðelode', are used quite evenly for eight speeches (one speech does not have a verb of speech[34]): 'mælde' [spoke] is used three times; 'gemælde' [spoke], 'clypode' [spoke, cried out], and 'cwæð' twice each; 'spræc' once. As *Beowulf* is the only extant epic poem in the corpus, the dominant use of 'maþelode', of course, may be due to the epic context, but it is also possible that the poet's choice of this *inquit* formula was purposeful, and that the preference for 'maþelode' is a characteristic feature of the *Beowulf* poet's use of *inquits*.

In this section, I would like to present some evidence in support of this hypothesis. I also hope to show that the poet seems to use the verb in a rather specific sense, that is, the etymological sense of the word 'maþelian': 'to make a formal speech in front of an assembly'. Moreover, it seems that the poet's frequent use of this verb is not simply formulaic in the sense that he relied on a pre-existing verbal building block but that he deliberately employed it to characterize the speeches which this verb introduces.

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[32] *Concordance*, pp. 179–80, p. 999, p. 1085.
[33] See Elise Louviot, 'Transitions from Direct Speech to Narration in Old English Poetry', *Neophilologus*, 197 (2013), 383–93 (footnote 1, p. 383).
[34] The introductory line is 'He to heofenum wlat' [He looked up to the heavens] (172).

The specific meaning of 'maþelode'

Although not as dominant as it is in *Beowulf,* the verb 'maþelode / maþelade' is also notable in *Elene*, which highlights the heroine's polemical verbal exchanges with the Jews concerning the Holy Cross; nine speeches out of thirty-one are marked by this verb. Lord points out that the verb in the poem is, in terms of proportion, used almost as frequently as in *Beowulf*.[35] The use of the *inquit*, in fact, seems to unite the poems, not only in its frequent use but also its meaning. In *Elene*, nineteen various expressions – including periphrases ('ageaf ondsware' [gave answer] or 'ongan negan' [began to address] as well as single verbs of speech ('þingode' [spoke] or 'spræc') – are used to introduce speeches, but most of them are used only once, though the verbs 'reordode' [said] and 'oncwæð' [replied] are used four times each and 'þæt word gecwæð' [spoke these words] five times. Cynewulf, to whom the poem has been ascribed because of the presence of his acrostic signature in runic letters at the end of the poem,[36] uses 'maþelode / maþelade' six times for introducing speeches of the heroine Helena, mother of the king Constantine the Great, and the other three for those of Judas, spokesperson of the Jews and the other leading figure in the poem. Bjork states that 'Cynewulf reshapes his Mediterranean source and adds striking and memorable scenes to make the poem both decidedly Anglo-Saxon and clearly his', observing how the poet deploys the lexis and imagery of Old English heroic poetry for some scenes, such as that of the sea journey.[37] The two poems *Beowulf* and *Elene* thus are comparable in their diction in spite of the difference in the narrative

[35] Lord, *Epic Singers*, p. 151.
[36] Lines 1257, 1259, 1260, 1261, 1263, 1265, 1268, and 1269.
[37] *The Old English Poems of Cynewulf,* ed. and trans. by Robert E. Bjork (London: Harvard University Press, 2013), p. xvii. The Mediterranean source is thought to be the *Acta Quiriaci* in the *Acta Sanctorum*. See *Sources and Analogues of Old English Poetry: The Major Latin Texts in Translation,* ed. and trans. by Michael J. B. Allen and Daniel G. Calder (Cambridge: Brewer, 1976), p. 59. Louviot guesses that Cynewulf was trying 'to make his poem sound more archaic than it really was, as part of his strategy to represent Elene as a true poetic hero': *Direct Speech*, p. 78.

contents, the former being secular-heroic and the latter Christian-hagiographic.

The usage of the two poets with regard to the *inquit* 'maþelode' seems to be similar. Robinson points out that the original sense of the verb 'was "to make a speech in the presence of an assembled group," the verb being formed from maðel, "meeting, assembly of people."' He notes that the verb does not mean simply 'speak' in *Beowulf*, and that the poet's recurrent use of the verb would have exerted full etymological force on his audience, drawing attention to the fact that '[t]he exact primitive sense of the Old English verb is captured in the Harley Glossary entry containing "contestatur in populo .maðelaþ."'[38] In *Beowulf*, twenty-five out of twenty-six speeches with this verb as an *inquit* are made in front of a gathering of people. The only one exception, to which we shall return, is the speech by Beowulf made in the presence of Wiglaf alone, with whom he has just defeated the dragon (2724–51). It seems true, therefore, that the verb in the poem does not really depart from the original sense. In *Elene*, likewise, the verb is used invariably for the speeches that Helena or Judas make in the presence of the heroine's troops or an assembly of the Jews; the verb in this poem also seems to be used with this specific meaning, not just as a general quotative verb.

The situations in which the *inquit* is used in these poems, however, are naturally as different as the narrative contents of the poems are. Helena is a Christian heroine, not a pre-Christian hero; her mission is not to defeat monsters but to discover the True Cross in Jerusalem, and she questions the stubborn Jews about its whereabouts. In *Elene*, therefore, the *inquit* is mostly used in scenes where Helena interrogates the Jews and Judas about the location of the Cross. In *Beowulf*, on the other hand, the characters make speeches mainly to express their public intentions before strangers or compatriots. Accordingly, the nature of the speeches in both poems

[38] Robinson, *Appositive Style*, p. 66.

differs considerably. Still, it can be pointed out that the *inquit* plays an important part in adding formality or solemnity to speeches in both poems. The first use of 'maþelode' in *Beowulf* is to introduce the Coastguard's speech. After he asks the Geats why they have come to their land and hears Beowulf's answer to his question:

> Weard **maþelode** ðær on wicge sæt,
> ombeht unforht: 'Æghwæþres sceal
> scearp scyldwiga gescad witan,
> worda ond worca, se þe wel þenceð.
> Ic þæt gehyre, þæt þis is hold weorod
> frean Scyldinga. Gewitaþ forð beran
> wæpen ond gewædu; ic eow wisige …' (286–92)

[The sentinel, a man fearless in fulfilling his duty, spoke from where he sat on horseback: 'The shrewd warriors who reflects sufficiently must know the difference between words and actions. I accept that this is a party of men loyal to the ruler of the Scyldings. Proceed, bearing weapons and armour. I shall guide you …']

The poet seems to dignify the Coastguard's remark and to formalize his permission for the strangers to enter the land by using the *inquit* 'maþelode'. In *Elene*, the most notable use of the verb occurs in the heroine's quasi-judicial dialogue with Judas: it is employed five times within eighty-one lines alternatingly for their verbal exchanges (lines 604, 642, and 685 for Helena; lines 627 and 655 for Judas). Most of Helena's speeches are commands and her words are sometimes fiercely direct. She threatens to kill Judas, for example, if he fails to answer her questions truthfully:

Elene **maðelode** þurh eorne hyge:

"Ic þæt geswerige þurh sunu meotodes,

þone ahangnan god, þæt ðu hungre scealt

for cneomagum cwylmed weorðan,

butan þu forlæte þa leasunga

ond me sweotollice soð gecyðe." (685–90)[39]

[Helen spoke in impassioned mood: 'I swear it by the Son of the ordaining Lord, by the crucified God, that you shall be put to death by starvation in front of your kinsmen unless you cease these lies and plainly reveal to me the truth.']

As Bjork points out, Cynewulf usually 'expands direct discourse a great deal in the poem in order to promote his themes and emphasize the immutability of Elene's faith'[40], but here the poet does not much amplify his Latin source: 'Beata Helena dixit: Per Crucifixum, famem te interficiam, nisi dixeris veritatem.'[41] [Blessed Helena said, "By Him who was crucified, I will kill you with hunger, unless you tell me the truth."][42] He only adds some phrases, such as 'for cneo-magum [in front of your kinsmen]'. Those additions may have been the minimum requirements to change the Latin prose into Old English alliterative verse. Helena speaks exclusively to Judas here, as the queen has held him hostage, letting the other Jews go (598–603), but the phrase 'for cneo-magum' effectively reminds us that this punishment will be imposed publicly. In addition, compared with the Latin *inquit* 'dixit', which

[39] All quotations from *Elene* are from *The Vercelli Book*, ed. by Krapp.
[40] Bjork, *Cynewulf*, p. xvii.
[41] All quotations from the 'Inventio sanctae crucis' are taken from *Acta apocrypha: Iudas, alias Quiriacus, Episcopus Martyr Hierosolymis*, in *Acta Sanctorum* (Antwerp: Société des Bollandistes) in *Acta Sanctorum: The Full Text Database* <http://acta.chadwyck.co.uk> [accessed 29 April 2016]
[42] Latin translations from the 'Inventio sanctae crucis' are taken from Allen and Calder.

simply marks direct speech and translates more literally to 'cwæð', the line with which the poet introduces Helena's speech – 'Elene maðelode | þurh eorne hyge' – serves to convey the mode and manner of the heroine's speech more clearly; the *inquit* 'maðelode' gives an official tone to her speech and adds solemnity to the threat, while the b-verse 'þurh eorne hyge' reveals her own eagerness to find the Cross: she does not act just to fulfill her duties to obey the emperor's command. The poet's frequent use of this *inquit* in this crucial scene of Helena's quest for the Cross seems to serve to make the dialogue sound more solemn and formal.[43]

The last 'maþelode' employed to introduce Judas's speech could be considered to reflect not only the original sense 'make a speech before an assembly' but also the primitive sense of the verb that Robinson points out, that is, 'contestatur in populo [invoke, or appeal to, in presence of people]'. The speech is made on the hill, Calvary, where he prays God to let a smoke rise up from the spot under which the Holy Cross is buried. Then, having received the exact sign, he expresses thanks to God:

> Iudas **maþelode**, gleaw in geþance:
> "Nu ic þurh soð hafu seolf gecnawen
> on heardum hige þæt ðu hælend eart
> middan-geardes. Sie ðe, mægena God,
> þrym-sittendum þanc butan ende …" (806–10)
>
> [Judas spoke, clear-sighted in his thinking: 'Now I have truly ascertained for myself in my obstinate mind that you are the Saviour of the world. Thanks without end be to you, God of the heavenly hosts, enthroned in majesty …']

[43] Gerald Richman suggests that the verb 'maðelian' may have a legal connotation in *Elene*: 'The Stylistic Effect and Form of Direct Discourse in Old English Literature' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Yale University, 1977), pp. 206–08.

The Latin source does not mention explicitly whether he is alone or with other people but only says that he discovered the three crosses, 'quas eiciens adtulit in civitatem' [which he lifted out and carried into the city]; since the verb 'adtulit' is singular, we are not required to visualize the presence of other persons. In *Elene*, on the other hand, it is obvious that there are people around. After Judas has dug twenty feet and found the crosses in the earth, the poet writes:

> He mid handum befeng
> wuldres wynbeam, ond mid weorode ahof
> of foldgræfe. Feðegestas
> eodon, æðelingas, in on þa ceastre. (842b–45)
>
> [With his hands he took hold of the joyous tree of glory and together with the crowd heaved it from its earthly grave. Garrisoned foot-soldiers, men of nobility, processed into the city.]

It is unmistakably said here that the crosses are carried by the multitude of 'feðegestas' or 'æðelingas' into the city. Judas's speech, therefore, is apparently heard by the crowd around him. His speech itself, however, is not directed to the crowd at all, but is addressed exclusively to God. It is rather like an official act of thanksgiving ceremonially performed by a priest. A second function, equally solemn, which Judas's speech performs is to declare his recognition that the Christian God is the true God. The purpose of 'maðelode' may be to emphasize the formal nature of his words. All the speeches introduced by 'maðelode' in *Elene* are related to public occasions, while those speeches do not seem necessarily to require a reciprocal response in all cases (404–10 and 806–26).

Since 'maþelian' is a denominative verb from the noun 'maðel' [meeting, assembly

of people], it is only to be expected that the verb should be used to introduce a speech made in front of an assembly of people, but it also seems to function as a way of signalling in advance the formality of the speech to be made. This function the *inquit* has in the speech of Judas is also perceptible in the speech of Beowulf, which is made after the fight with the dragon. This is clearly not a speech made to a 'maðel'. The single auditor is Wiglaf, but interestingly the hero does not seem to talk to him at the beginning of the speech at all:

> Biowulf **maþelode** …
> 'Nu ic suna minum syllan wolde
> guðgewædu, þær me gifeðe swa
> ænig yrfeweard æfter wurde
> lice gelenge. Ic ðas leode heold
> fiftig wintra …' (2724–33)

[Beowulf spoke … 'Now I should have wished to give my battle-clothing to my son, had it been so ordained that any heir engendered of my body should have followed me. I have ruled this nation for fifty years …']

He starts this speech with mentioning a desire to pass treasures to his own heir if it had been granted to him, and then moves to his self-evaluation as a king, looking back and contemplating how he has ruled his nation, now that he is facing his death: he is speaking as a king. The verb 'maþelode' seems to emphasize the formal nature of his words here again; the poet does not seem to use it for the purpose of introducing dialogue.

Bjork, who also considers the verb 'maþelian' as used in the original sense in *Beowulf,* agreeing with Robinson's view, sees the last series of Beowulf's speeches

(lines 2729–51, 2794–2808, and 2813–16) as ironically mischaracterized by the verb. He insists that the etymological sense of the verb 'acts in concert with other stabilizing fa**c**tors in part 1 [lines1–2199], where it underscores the importance of dialogue and reciprocity, but in part 2 [lines 2200–3182] it works at odds with the monologues of the speakers, which – somehow caught in mid-flight – rarely seem directed at a *mæþel*.' He maintains that the 'poet may be doubly reinforcing the ironic use of *maþelian*.'[44] It seems, however, that in *Beowulf* the verb is employed not only to mark a speech that a speaker addresses to an assembly but also to confirm the formal nature of the speaker's words. The absence of interactive responses from the audience may not necessarily be at odds with the use of the *inquit*. The verb 'maþelode' is first used for the speech of the Coastguard, who has spotted the Geats landing (as above), and then for the envoy, Wulfgar ('Wulfgar maþelode': 348a), who makes enquiries of them at the hall entrance. Both of them, of course, speak to a kind of assembly, fifteen strangers, not to a single person, but the use of this *inquit* seems to contribute more to giving a certain authoritative and assertive tone to their words as officials of the king. Neither speech gets any response from the Geats but is simply followed by actions matching the words of the speakers: the Coastguard guides the Geats towards the royal hall and Wulfgar goes to the king Hrothgar to consult about their wish to see him.[45]

The formulaic status of 'maþelode'

Since the *inquit* 'maþelode' is so frequently used in *Beowulf*, its use in this poem has often been considered simply formulaic. Klaeber refers to 'set expressions

[44] Bjork, 'Speech as Gift', p. 1001–02.
[45] See Chapter 4, where I will discuss the relation between the 'commitment' speeches and actions.

occurring with the formula-like regularity well known from Homeric epic'[46], and cites the following examples:

Beowulf maþelode, bearn Ecgþeowes
[son of Ecgtheow]
Hroðgar maþelode, helm Scyldinga
[protecting lord of the Scyldings]
Wiglaf maðelode, Weohstanes sunu
[Weohstan's son]

There are six speeches of Hroðgar with the *inquit* 'maþelode', and half of them have the introduction above (371, 456, and 1321). Likewise, two out of three speeches of Wiglaf follow the same pattern (2862 and 3076 [Wihstanes sunu]), and most notably, nine out of twelve speeches of Beowulf begin with the same line as that quoted above (529, 631, 957 [Ecþeowes], 1383, 1473, 1651, 1817, 1999 [Biowulf maðelode, | bearn Ecgðioes], and 2425 [Biowulf maþelade, | bearn Ecgðeowes]).

Before considering the question of whether the *Beowulf* poet's use of 'maþelode' is formulaic, it is necessary to consider the term 'formulaic', which usually bears a negative connotation and suggests lack of originality. The question of formulae became quite controversial after Francis P. Magoun claimed that *Beowulf* had been composed orally based on his analysis of the first twenty-five lines of the poem. Magoun demonstrated the poem's formulaic nature, using Milman Parry's famous definition of a formula as 'a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea', and also his definition of a formulaic system, 'a group of phrases which have the same metrical value and

[46] Klaeber, p. lv.

which are enough alike in thought and words to leave no doubt that the poet who used them knew them not only as single formulas, but also as formulas of a certain type'. [47] However, since Parry based himself on Homeric epics, which differ considerably in metric system from Old English alliterative poetry, many critics thought that the application of Parry's definitions to Old English verse did not work properly. Accordingly, many attempts have since made to redefine a formula in a way that better fits Old English poetry. [48] Yet there seems to be no widely accepted definition of what a formula in Old English poetry is. Definitions vary, chiefly because scholars have different ideas about how formulae work, and in particular about whether a certain phrase or line is regarded as a formula or not. Nevertheless, no one has disputed that the above-quoted 'maþelode' lines in *Beowulf* are formulaic, though there are some disagreements about how to categorise them: Are these formulae or do they belong to a larger formulaic system? Is the whole line formulaic or is it the half-line?[49] Whatever one's view on these matters, the lines above do seem to exemplify Parry's definition of the formula (a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea). In these lines, noun + 'maþelode' is unarguably regularly employed to express the idea that the subject of the line makes a speech.

Certainly, at first glance, the 'maþelode' lines look like a set expression, consisting of b-verses in variation with the proper names, the subjects of the verb, in the a-verses. In fact, the structure of these b-verses is very common in both Icelandic and

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[47] Francis P. Magoun, Jr., 'Oral-Formulaic Character of Anglo-Saxon Narrative Poetry', *Speculum*, 29 (1953), 446–67.

[48] For Old English formulaic studies, see John Miles Foley, 'The Oral Theory in Context', in *Oral Traditional Literature: A Festschrift for Albert Bates Lord*, ed. by John Miles Foley (Columbus: Slavica, 1981), pp. 60–91.

[49] Donald K. Fry states that the 'maþelode' line is made from two formulaic systems: 'Old English formulas and systems', *English Studies*, 48, (1967), 193–204, p. 203. A. C. Watts regards it as a whole line formula, according to her definition: *The Lyre and the Harp: A Comparative Reconsideration of Oral Tradition in Homer and Old English Epic Poetry* (London: Yale University Press, 1969), p. 81.

Old English poetry. Brodeur explains this structure called *viðkenning* by the Icelanders:

> The *viðkenning* has the structure base-noun combined with limiting genitive; but its base-word is always a term of ownership or of personal relationship (e.g., 'owner,' 'father,' 'brother,' 'son,' 'friend,' 'enemy,' 'slayer,' etc.); and its limiting word is the *name* of the person or the owned object with whom, or with which, the specified relationship exists, or a recognizable substitute therefor.[50]

He emphasises that 'it is pronominal in function', and 'in its direct and unmistakable identification it is poles apart from the kenning,' adding that it 'at once lost its character as a rhetorical device when it was used with, instead of as a substitution for, the name of the referent.' Accordingly, he concludes that 'in the well-known formula *Beowulf maþelode, bearn Ecgþeowes*, the combination *bearn Ecgþeowes* is not a *viðkenning* but a mere patronymic.'[51] This formula, the combination of the *inquit* 'maþelode' and a patronymic, however, is not found anywhere else in the corpus but in *Beowulf*. In *The Battle of Maldon*, a poem on a historical battle, many names of people are mentioned, and consequently the poet often uses both *viðkenning* and patronymics: 'Offan mæg' [relative] (5); 'Ceolan sunu' (76); 'Byrhtelmes bearn' (92); 'Byrhtnoðes mæg' (114); 'Æþelredes þegen' (151); 'Wulfstanes bearn' (155); 'Oddan bearn' (186 and 238); 'Æþelredes eorl' (203); 'bearn Ælfrices' (209); 'Ecglafes bearn' (267); 'Sibyrhtes broðor' (282); 'Gaddes mæg' (287); 'Þurstanes sunu' (298); 'Wigelmes bearn' (300); 'Æþelgares bearn' (320). Nevertheless, he does

[50] Brodeur, *Art*, p. 251.
[51] Brodeur, *Art*, p. 252.

not use this structure with the *inquit* for his two 'maþelode' lines:

Byrhtnoð **maþelode**, bord hafenode (42)

Byrhtwold **maþelode**, bord hafenode (309)[52]

The poet repeats the same b-verse 'bord hafenode' [he lifted his shield] for the *inquit* formula; his concern seems to be to link the half-lines by rhyme. On the other hand, the *Beowulf* poet might have been more concerned with putting emphasis on the identification of the speaker, especially in respect of his lineage or social position.

The only example parallel to the 'maþelode' formula in *Beowulf* is found in *Hildebrandslied*, the single surviving Old High German alliterative verse. The similar *inquit* formula used in the fragmentary sixty-six-line heroic poem is:

Hiltibra*n*t **gimahalta** – Heribrantes sunu … (7)

Hiltibrant **gimahalta**, Herib*r*antes suno (43)

[Hildebrand made a speech, Heribrand's son]

Hadubra*n*t **gimahalta**, Hiltibrantes sunu (14)

Hadubra*n*t **gima[ha]lta**, Hiltibrantes sunu (34)[53]

[Hadubrand made a speech, Hildebrand's son]

The structure of this formula is the same as that used with the verb 'maþelode' and Wiglaf (Wiglaf maðelode | Weohstanes sunu): the a-verse consists of a personal name, the subject ('Hiltibrant'), and a verb of speech ('gimahalta') followed by the b-verse

[52] All quotations from *The Battle of Maldon* are from *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*, ed. by Elliott van Kirk Dobbie (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1942).
[53] All quotations and translations from *Hildebrandslied* are from Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, pp. 339–41.

consisting of a patronymic, the genitive case of the name of the subject's father ('Heribrantes') and 'sunu'. These examples may be the main reason why the *Beowulf* poet's 'maðelode' formula has commonly been seen as formulaic in spite of the fact that it is found only in *Beowulf* in Old English poetry. Paule Mertens-Fonck, in her article on the structure of the introduction to speeches in *Beowulf,* asserts, citing these lines, that the equivalent line for Wiglaf belongs to a more traditional type than those for Hrothgar and Beowulf, because the name of the son alliterates with that of the father in those lines.[54] Brodeur, who also regards the use of the 'maþelode' formula in *Beowulf* as a traditional formula, draws attention to this *inquit* formula in *Hildebrandslied*, though his purpose in comparing the poems is to point out how the *Beowulf* poet treats traditional formulae in his own 'plastic' way.[55] The *inquit* 'gimahalta', however, is actually a different verb. And while the formula Hildebrand's son + 'gimahalta' in *Hildebrandslied* can certainly be considered as a typical example of Germanic traditional formulae, it can equally be seen as the poet's emphasis on the relationship between the father and the son, who do not initially know each other's identity. The scop starts the narrative with the encounter of Hildebrand and Hadubrand:

> Ik gihorta ðat seggen,
> ðat sih urhettun ænon muotin,
> Hiltibra*n*t enti Haðubrant, untar heriun tuem
> sunufatarungo. (1–4)

[I heard it told that warriors met singly, Hildebrand and Hadubrand, between two armies, father and son.]

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[54] Mertens-Fonck, p. 435.
[55] Brodeur, *Art*, p. 28.

This beginning unambiguously tells us that the poem is about the tale of Hildebrand and Hadubrand, father and son. The armies are about to begin to fight and the leaders exchange their words. Hildebrand finds out from Hadubrand's speech that the opponent is his own son that he had to leave behind many years ago. Hildebrand asks his son to be reconciled with him by offering his rings, but Hadubrand, who firmly believes his father is dead, refuses it. The discourse between the father and the son is the main part of the poem, followed by a six-line description of their single combat, but the end of the poem is missing. According to Frederick Norman, it is most likely from other parallels that the father, the more experienced warrior, will defeat his own son.[56] If the two leaders in the poem were not close kinsmen, those recurrent lines might well be considered a mere use of the *inquit* formula, but it seems clear from the narrative that the kinship between Hildebrand and Hadubrand, father and son, is crucial in this poem, and the use of the patronymic ('So-and-so's son) enhances the dramatic irony: the audience is reminded of the relationship of which the son is ignorant. One cannot therefore conclude that the poem provides any evidence that the combination of a formal verb of speech with patronymic was common outside these two poems. In *Hildebrandslied* the reasons for it being used are very specific. Likewise, the *Beowulf* poet might have created the 'maþelode' formula with patronymics to put emphasis on the public identity and noble lineage of the speakers.

Whenever the *Beowulf* poet uses the verb 'maþelode', in fact, he makes it clear in what circumstances he or she is going to make a speech as well as who the speaker is. When Unferth, Hrothgar's retainer, speaks for the first time in the poem, for

[56] Frederick Norman and A. T. Hatto, *Three Essays on the Hildebrandslied* (London: The Institute of Germanic Studies, 1973), p. 38.

example, the poet takes pains to give sufficient information about him:

*U*nferð **maþelode**, Ecglafes bearn,
þe æt fotum sæt frean Scyldinga,
onband beadurune. Wæs him Beowulfes sið,
modges merefaran, micel æfþunca,
forþon þe he ne uþe þæt ænig oðer man
æfre mærða þon ma middangeardes
gehedde under heofenum þonne he sylfa (499–505)

[Unferth, Ecglaf's son, who sat at the feet of the lord of the Scyldings, spoke out and unloosed provocative imputations. To him the enterprise of Beowulf, the courageous seafarer, was a great insult because he did not allow that any other man on earth might ever gain more glories beneath the heavens than he himself.]

He gives not only Unferth's lineage ('Ecglafes bearn'), his physical position ('æt fotum sæt frean Scyldinga'), and his manner of speech ('onband beadurune') but also an additional explanation of how he feels toward Beowulf – all between the *inquit* formula and his actual speech, using four and a half verses. Similarly, before giving Wiglaf his first speech introduced by 'maðelode', the poet again takes up as many as twenty-nine lines to identify Wiglaf and to inform us about what urges him to help his lord Beowulf (2602–30). In these lines, his lineage is first mentioned:

Wiglaf wæs haten, Weoxstanes sunu,
leoflic lindwiga, leod Scylfinga,
mæg Ælfheres (2602–04a)

[He was called Wiglaf, Weohstan's son, a much-loved soldier, a prince of the Scylfings, a kinsman of Ælfhere.]

Then the poet proceeds to tell of Weohstan, the father of Wiglaf, and his valour as a notable warrior. The poet gives information about these speakers so carefully beforehand that we can have clear ideas of the public identity of the speakers and the purpose of the words introduced by the verb 'maþelian'. We could even anticipate what they are going to say in their speeches.

It seems quite certain that the *Beowulf* poet did not use the *inquit* from usefulness. According to Parry, Homer uses a formula 'without second thought as the natural means of getting his idea into verse.'[57] He observes that Homer uses the phrase 'ἔπεα πτερόεντα' [winged words] without attaching any particular meaning to the epithet 'winged', for example, when he has a verse to fill and simply wants to say 'and he said'.[58] Parry explains:

> Homer, to simplify his verse-making, has a system of verses which express the idea such and such a person said […] One special line of this type which is needed is that in which the character who is to speak has been the subject of the last verses so that the use of his name in the line would be clumsy. The one verse that will do this is *καί μιν φωνήσας ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα* [and him addressing winged words he spoke] […] Homer has this one line for this one frequent need, and its use always brings in *ἔπεα πτερόεντα*.[59]

[57] Milman Parry, *The Making of Homeric Verse*, ed. by Adam Parry (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 272.
[58] Parry, pp. 414–16.
[59] Parry, pp. 372–73.

The *inquit* formula described here fits the definition well: it is chosen for metrical convenience, not for the meaning. Although repeatedly used, it is hard to assume that the *Beowulf* poet made use of the 'maþelode' formula simply to fill in his verse as Homer might have done with 'winged words'. The poet's use of the 'maþelode' formula seems fundamentally different from that of Homeric 'ἔπεα πτερόεντα'.

Parry believes that a main function of the formula in oral poetry lies in its metrical usefulness as a means of making verse, so he claims that '[w]hen the element of usefulness is lacking, one does not have a formula but a repeated phrase which has been knowingly brought into the verse for some special effect.'[60] As we have seen, the *Beowulf* poet seems to use the *inquit* 'maþelode' not in a general sense that other common *inquits*, such as 'cwæð', have, but in a more specific meaning close to the primitive sense of the verb and therefore it is not probable that it is repeatedly used from sheer usefulness. Considering the rarity of the whole line repetition in *Beowulf*, I am inclined to think that the poet's recurrent use of the 'maþelode' formula is purposeful and deliberate: making use of traditional poetic diction, he may have created this whole-verse formula for his own purpose, perhaps, to draw special attention to the speeches which are about to be made.[61] Watts says, in order to explain a syntactical association that she thinks is necessary for a whole line to be regarded as a formula, that 'no student of Old English poetry would hesitate to supply the second half-line to *Beowulf maþelode*, or the first half-line to *bearn Ecgþeowes*'.[62] As I have indicated, this is not in fact true of any expectations that

[60] Parry, p. 272.
[61] For the rarity of the whole line repetition in *Beowulf*, see Introduction and Orchard, *Companion*, p. 86. Homeric epics contain far more one-line repetition. See William Whallon, 'The Diction of Beowulf', *PMLA*, 76 (1961), 309–19 (p. 311).
[62] Watts, p. 81.

would have been formed from any other actual Old English poems. But the remark shows how the line manages to suggest recognisability. This may be some special effect that the poet might have intended to produce in order to make it clear to his audience that those speeches introduced by the *inquit* have special importance in the narrative. I shall examine each speech with this *inquit* more closely in Chapter 4, especially focusing on how the contents of the speeches are related to the deeds of the speakers.

'Cwæð', 'spræc' and 'sægde'

The verbs 'cweðan', 'sprecan', and 'secgan' are very common verbs of speech in Old English poetry. For the first- and third-person singular preterite forms of these verbs alone, *Concordance* lists 103 instances of 'cwæð', 67 of 'spræc', and 56 of 'sægde'. The *Beowulf* poet, however, does not use them as frequently as 'maþelode' to introduce direct speech; 'cwæð' is used three times, 'cwið' (the third person singular present form 'cweðan') once, 'spræc' six times and 'sægde' only twice. These numbers might seem too small to reveal any distinct features in usage. Yet, unlike the verb 'maþelian', which is employed solely to introduce direct speech in the third person singular preterite form, these verbs serve to introduce indirect speech as well. These are some typical examples:

> **cwæð þæt** wilcuman Wedera leodum
> scaþan scirhame to scipe foron. (1894–95)
>
> [(the coastguard) declared that they went aboard ship as warriors in shining armour whose return would be a joy to the Weder-Geatish people]

> Blondenfeaxe,

gomele ymb godne ongeador **spræcon**

þæt hig þæs æðelinges eft ne wendon … (1594b–96)

[Grey-haired old men declared to each other that from now on they held out no hope for the prince …]

Me man **sægde** **þæt** þu ðe for sunu wolde

hereri[n]c habban. (1175–76a)

[I have been told that you would like to have this fighting-man for your son.]

The instance of 'sprecan' with indirect speech quoted above is the sole instance, and it can be distinct from the other verbs 'cweðan' and 'secgan' in that it is mostly used in parallel variation with other verbs of speech to introduce direct speech, such as 'maþelode'; only one instance out of six serves as a single *inquit* (1168).

The verbs 'cweðan' and 'secgan', on the other hand, are employed with indirect speech more often than with direct speech. When instances introducing indirect speech are included, 'cweðan' is used eleven times and 'secgan' twenty times.[63] One apparent difference in usage of these two verbs with indirect speech is that 'cweðan' introduces only statements, while 'secgan' introduces questions as well as statements. Another less obvious difference is that most instances of 'secgan' with indirect speech are themselves embedded within direct speech (thirteen out of eighteen), whereas those of 'cweðan' with indirect speech are used mostly in the narrative (five out of seven). In his recent paper that examines the verbs of speech 'quod' and 'seide' in *Piers Plowman*, J. A. Burrow points out that Langland makes a

[63] 'Cweðan' with indirect speech: 92, 199, 1810, 1894, 2158, 2939, and 3180. 'Secgan' with indirect speech: 51, 90, 377, 391, 411, 473, 590, 942, 1175, 1346, 1696, 1700, 1724, 1818, 1945, 2864, 3026, and 3152.

distinction in usage between these two verbs.[64] He states that this distinction becomes clear when the poet's use of the verbs is analysed in the light of 'narrative levels' noticed by Gérard Genette.[65] Burrow observes that Langland employs 'quod' distinctly on the first narrative level. Interestingly enough, this is true of the verb 'cweðan' in *Beowulf*, which is largely used on the first narrative level, although it does not share the other features of 'quod' Burrow presents — for example, 'quod' does not govern indirect speech. The *Beowulf* poet's different use of the two verbs on the narrative levels also seems to reveal that the poet distinguishes these two synonymous verbs in usage; 'cweðan' is employed chiefly to introduce what characters utter, while 'secgan' is used in order that characters report or transmit information to others.

Louis Goossens studies those Old English verbs in comparison with the modern English verbs of speech 'speak', 'talk', 'say', and 'tell' using a corpus-based method to show how they 'frame the linguistic action scene'.[66] In order to characterise them, he examines the frequency of the syntactical patterns of these verbs, for example, what kind of direct or indirect objects or what prepositional phrases they take. I list some of his findings with regard to the Old English verbs, since they are relevant to what we see in *Beowulf*:

Sprecan

- This verb has the primary focus on the verbal action itself, not on the message, though it allows some message focus.

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[64] J. A. Burrow, '"Quod" and "Seide" in "Piers Plowman"', *Notes and Queries*, 62 (2015), 521–24. This paper has inspired me to take account of 'narrative levels' for my analysis of the equivalent Old English verbs of speech.

[65] Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin (New York: Cornell University Press, 1972), pp. 227–62.

[66] Louis Goossens, 'Framing the Linguistic Action Scene in Old and Present-day English: OE CWEÞAN, SECGAN, SP(R)ECAN and Present-day English Speak, Talk, Say and Tell Compared', in *Papers from the 6th International Conference on Historical Linguistics*, ed. by Jacek Fisiak (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1985), 149–70 (p. 149).

- It is frequently used with manner adverbials.

Cweðan

- This verb has clear message focus; it does not focus on the verbal action itself.
- Direct speech is its favoured territory.
- Þæt-clauses occur in a high proportion – to introduce indirect statements (indirect questions seem impossible with this verb).

Secgan

- This verb has message focus, but the message is usually condensed.
- It has a degree of addressee focus, which is realised by a dative case without the preposition 'to'.[67]

Goossens further subcategorises direct objects into six different units: direct speech, þæt-clause, hu-/hw-/gyf-clause, accusative non-clausal object, accusative non-clausal object + semipredicative complement, and genitive non-clausal object. He uses the term 'message focus' according to the proportion of instances with a clause, especially direct speech. Accordingly, he characterises 'cweðan' as a verb with message focus because it has prominently the most instances with direct speech of the three. He admits that his observations are limited in various ways, since Old English was used over several centuries with dialectal variation. His characterisations of each verb, however, fit those of the equivalent verbs in *Beowulf*, and thus show that the poet may have chosen the verbs of speech for his verse with idiomatic preciseness, not simply for metrical purposes.

In what follows, I shall illustrate how the poet distinguishes them in usage, examining speech-introductory passages containing these verbs. The prefixed forms 'acweðan', 'gecweðan', 'gesecgan' and 'gesprecan' will be considered together, since there is no apparent distinction in usage between the un-prefixed and prefixed

[67] Goossens, pp. 157–70. See Table III (pp. 159–69).

forms.[68]

'-Cweðan'

The main function of the verb '-cweðan' in the poem seems to convey the actual words of a speaker. Most instances of 'cweðan' with direct or indirect speech are used to introduce speeches in the narrative voice. This is also true of the prefixed forms 'acweðan' and 'gecweðan' – there are six instances of these verbs found in the poem: 'acwyð' (2046); 'acwæð' (654); 'gecwæde' (2664); 'gecwæð' (857, 874, and 987). Consistent with Goossens's statement that the verb is 'the favoured item to introduce direct enunciations',[69] the verb '-cweðan' serves as a typical *inquit*, and thus functions like 'maþelode', which is used exclusively to introduce direct speech. Moreover, even when '-cweðan' introduces indirect speech, it appears to be still close to the speakers' actual utterances.

There are five instances of direct speech introduced by '-cweðan' – the present tense 'cwyð' and 'acwyð' are used to introduce the same direct speech. I list the introductory passages using the *inquit* for ease of comparison. The first instance introduces a speech of the Coastguard, in which he tells Beowulf and his companions that he needs to return to the coasts to do his duties after leading them to where they can see the hall of Hrothgar.

1. guðbeorna sum
wicg gewende, word æfter **cwæð** (314b–15)

[The distinguished warrior turned his horse about and then spoke these

[68] Michiko Ogura also notes that 'acweðan' and 'gecweðan', the prefixed forms of 'cweðan', are largely used in the same way as the unprefixed form. See *The Syntactic and Semantic Rivalry of Quoth, Say and Tell in Medieval English* (Hirakata, Osaka: Kufs Publication, 1981), p. 58.
[69] Goossens, p.168.

words.]

The second instance is used to introduce a speech of Hrothgar, who talks to Beowulf after the welcoming feast for the young warrior. He is going to retire to his bedroom.

2. [Ge]grette þa guma oþerne,
Hroðgar Beowulf, ond him hæl abead,
winærnes geweald, ond þæt word **acwæð** (652–54)
[Then the one man saluted the other; Hrothgar saluted Beowulf and wished him success, supremacy over the festive-hall, and delivered these words.]

The third one is found within a speech that Beowulf makes before his own king Hygelac when he has come back from the land of the Danes. Here he predicts what is to happen as a result of the engagement of Freawaru, Hrothgar's daughter, to Ingeld, a prince of the Heathobards, with whom the Danes have been at feud. He relates vividly how an old warrior will incite a young one to vengeance when he sees Danes wearing heirlooms looted from the Heathobards in the past.

3. Þonne **cwið** æt beore se ðe beah gesyhð,
eald æscwiga, se ðe eall ge(ma*n*),
garcwealm gumena – him bið grim (se)fa –
onginneð geomormod geong(um) cempan
þurh hreðra gehygd higes cunnian,
wigbealu weccean, ond þæt word **acwyð** (2041–46)
[So, during the beerdrinking, some old spear-warrior will speak out, who is eyeing one precious object, and who remembers everything, the men's

slaughter by the spear – bitter is the heart within him. Brooding in spirit he sets out to try the young soldier's temper and provoke some evil act of war by the thoughts from out of his breast, and he speaks these word.]

The fourth instance introduces the monologue of the Last Survivor, who brought treasures to a cave a long time ago.

4. þær on inn(*a*)n bær eorlgestreona
hringa hyrde h(*o*)rdwyrðne dæl,
fættan goldes, fe(*a*) worda **cwæð** (2244–46)[70]

[Into it the custodian of the rings carried a hoarded and cherished quantity of riches fit for earls and uttered a few words]

The last 'cwæð' is used to introduce a speech of Wiglaf when he comes to assist Beowulf, who is fighting against the dragon.

5. Wod þa þurh þone wælrec, wigheafolan bær
frean on fultum, fea worda **cwæð** (2661–62)

[Then he strode through the deadly reek and went wearing his helmet to the help of his lord. He spoke a few words.]

It is noticeable that all the instances above have the same pattern: the verb takes 'word' and 'fea worda' as a direct object, immediately followed by direct speech, with the exception of 'cwið' in passage 3, to which I shall return. It is also worth noticing

[70] 'Round brackets are used in conjunction with italics to indicate departures from the Thorkelin transcripts' sole evidence': Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, p. 2.

that there is no instance of '-cweðan' with an accusative noun without being appositive to direct speech. This structure plays a role in reinforcing the connection between the accusative noun/nominal phrase and the following direct speech, since the speech is grammatically appositive to 'word/fea worda'. Thus 'cwæð' suggests that it reproduces exactly what the speaker expresses in words. Unlike the speeches introduced by 'maþelode', which are usually connected to publicity and formality, the speeches introduced by the *inquit* can be considered more unpremeditated and emotive. This may also not be irrelevant to the fact that the speeches introduced by the *inquit* are relatively short (see Apendix 1); they are 9.4 lines long on average, while the speeches in the poem have an average of 28 lines. The speech following the first introductory passage above has only four lines – one of the shortest speeches in the poem:

'Mæl is me to feran; fæder alwalda
mid arstafum eowic gehealde
siða gesunde. Ic to sæ wille,
wið wrað werod wearde healdan.' (316–19)

[It is time for me to go. May the Father and Ruler of all in his loving-kindness keep you safe in your undertakings. I will go back to the sea, to keep guard against any hostile band.]

These words are quite natural as parting greetings, showing that the Coastguard really trusts in the goodwill of the Geats. By using this *inquit*, the poet implies that this short speech is more straightforward and free from official formality. Wiglaf's speech, which has the introductory phrase 'fea worda cwæð' (passage 5), is also short:

‘Leofa Biowulf, læst eall tela,
swa ðu on geoguðfeore geara gecwæde
þæt ðu ne alæte be ðe lifigendum
dom gedreosan; scealt nu dædum rof,
æðeling anhydig, ealle mægene
feorh ealgian; ic ðe fullæstu.’ (2663–68)

[‘Dear Beowulf, see the whole thing through properly, in keeping with what you declared long ago in the days of your youth, that while you lived you would not let your reputation fail. Now, resolute prince, renowned for your deeds, you must defend your life with all your strength. I shall support you.’]

The situation is urgent: Wiglaf utters just what he wants to say, without any care that he should take when speaking to his king. Such remarks as ‘ic ðe fullæstu’ are forthright, showing no formality. Matti Rissanen also notes that the use of the *inquit* introducing ‘the short and highly emotive cry to Beowulf’ is appropriate in contrast to the use of ‘maþelode’, which introduces Wiglaf’s first speech addressing the cowardly retainers.[71] It seems that the phrase ‘fea worda’ does not indicate brevity but speaking plainly without the care usually used in formal speech. The monologue, in which the Last Survivor laments his miserable state of being left behind by his lord and companions, is introduced by the phrase ‘fea worda cwæð’ (passage 4), though this speech is not short, having twenty lines. In this speech, he expresses his own personal thoughts or feelings, since he has no audience. His speech does not need couching with care, either. The phrase ‘a few’ suggests that the words are not constrained by diplomacy but come straight out from the speaker’s mouth.

The use of the present tense *inquits* in passage 3 is distinct from the other

[71] Rissanen, ‘*Maþelian* in Old English Poetry’, pp. 166–67.

introductory passages, as this is the sole instance of it introducing direct speech not only embedded within another speech but also found in an embedded story, that is, on the second narrative level. The two *inquits* form a rhetorical device known as 'the envelop pattern', in which the same or similar words are used at the beginning and the end of a section as if the words envelop the part.[72] This device is frequently used in *Beowulf*. It may, however, be equally worth noting that the poet usually uses a different *inquit* to vary the first. This is the single instance in which the poet repeats the *inquit*, though, strictly speaking, they are not exactly the same. But if the poet uses the *inquit* '-cweðan' to introduce direct speech which indicates an unpremeditated intention of the speaker, he might have emphasised, by repeating the *inquit*, that the old retainer's words have not been conceived well beforehand but rather made on the spot, triggered by the sight of the treasures once belonging to them.

The use of the *inquit* '-cweðan' contrasts markedly with that of 'maþelode', which is more related to formality or the speaker's social position. Whenever the poet uses 'maþelode', he always gives us clear ideas of who is going to speak, mentioning his social position or genealogy. Accordingly, its use is more restricted than that of 'cwæð'; it is not used for an anonymous person. The poet describes the Last Survivor using various phrases: 'gumena nathwylc' [some man or other] (2233b), 's(*e*) an ða gen / leoda duguðe, | se ðær lengest hwearf, / weard winegeomor' [this one man still remaining from the flower of the nation, the one there who had longest survived, a sentinel mourning for his friends] (2237b–39a), and 'hringa hyrde' [the custodian of the rings] (2245a). These descriptions gradually reveal the present situation the man endures, but only in an allusive way; the poet does not use any proper names nor tell

[72] See Adeline Courtney Bartlett, *The Larger Rhetorical Patterns in Anglo-Saxon Poetry* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1935; repr. New York: AMS Press, 1966), pp. 9–29.

of his social position. 'Maþelode' signals a speech whereby the speaker expresses his or her formal or diplomatic intention or purpose, and thus the identity of the speaker is essential to the use of the *inquit*; 'cwæð' is used simply to focus on the words of the speaker. While the poet employs 'maþelode' to denote the formality of the speech it introduces, he uses 'cwæð' to demarcate a speech from the narrative, rather similar to the function of modern inverted commas, which of course were not available to medieval writers.

The other eleven instances of '-cweðan' are used to introduce indirect speech, which takes two syntactic patterns: with a 'that' clause (92, 857, 874, 987, 1894, 2158, 2664, and 3180) and with an asyndetic clause (199, 1810, and 2939). What is notable is that most of the instances are used in the narrative voice, and the subjects of the verb are all characters in the poem, just as those introducing direct speech. Only three instances are found within speeches: a speech of Beowulf (2158), which was made when the hero tells Hygelac of his adventure after he has returned home from the land of the Danes, a speech of Wiglaf (2664 as above) and the speech of the Messenger (2939), in which he tells of past wars with Franks and Swedes.

These instances found in the narrative voice are used for the scop (92 and 874), Beowulf (199 and 1810), the Coastguard (1894), and a collection of people (857, 987, and 3180). Klaeber notes that indirect discourse in the poem 'is properly preferred for less important functions […] and in the case of utterances by a collection of people'.[73] I consider the functions of indirect speech in the next chapter together with the question why the scop's songs, including the Finnsburg episode, and collective speeches are not in direct speech, so here I shall pay attention to the passages of indirect speech of Beowulf and the Coastguard, whose speeches are introduced by both direct and indirect speech. It is obvious that their speeches in

[73] Klaeber, pp. lv–lvi. He includes the Finnsburg episode in direct discourse.

indirect speech, compared with those in direct speech, are very short, and therefore it seems only natural that they are presented in indirect speech, as Klaeber points out. The first passage of indirect speech is used to tell that Beowulf intends to help the Danish king Hrothgar, who has been suffering from Grendel's attacks:

> **cwæð**, he guðcyning
> ofer swanrade secean wolde,
> mærne þeoden, þa him wæs manna þearf. (199b–201)
> [He declared that he wanted to go seeking the warrior-king, the famed prince, across the swan-road, since he was in need of men.]

The poet has not mentioned the hero's name yet; he only refers to Beowulf as 'Higelaces þegn' [a thane of Hygelac] (194b). This may not be a less important moment of the poem as the hero Beowulf is introduced in the poem for the first time, but the poet may have intended to make him less conspicuous at this stage by using indirect speech. The other passage of indirect speech is used when Beowulf returns the sword to Unferth after the fight with Grendel's mother. Despite the fact that the sword has not been helpful:

> **cwæð**, he þone guðwine godne tealde,
> wigcræftigne … (1810–11a)
> [(he) said he regarded that friend in battle as an efficient one, strong in the fray …]

This, along with the passage of indirect speech of the Coastguard (1894–95, see above), can indeed be considered less important with regard to the plot of the poem,

although it serves well, of course, to reveal Beowulf's good-natured disposition to minimize hostility — even towards such an envious figure as Unferth. At any rate, it is evident that even in the case of the verb '-cweðan' governing indirect speech, the poet uses it to tell us what characters say, though it is not the exact reproduction but a close approximation of the speakers' utterances. This is more apparent when it is compared with the subordinate clauses preceded by the verb 'secgan'

'Secgan'

The verb 'sægde' is used only twice to introduce direct speech. But in one of these two cases the verb may not in fact serve as a true *inquit*. It is used in parallel variation with the verb 'maðelode':

> Wiglaf maðelode, wordrihta fela
> **sægde** gesiðum – him wæs sefa geomor (2631–32)
> [Wiglaf spoke out and voiced many truthful remarks to his companions; his spirit was melancholy]

The poet appears to use 'sægde' here to add a parenthetic explanation of the situation: 'wordrihta fela' is the direct object of the verb. Unlike 'fea worda', the phrase 'wordrihta fela' is perhaps not immediately appositive to direct speech, but the condensed contents of what Wiglaf is about to say, which serves as the 'qualitative evaluation' of his speech, according to Goossens' terminology. He distinguishes it from such a direct object as 'a few words', which he calls 'quantified representation'.[74] It thus might not function just as the phrase 'fea worda cwæð' does.

[74] Goossens, p. 151. He uses these categories for the characterisations of modern verbs of speech.

Moreover, if the verb 'sægde' is thought to have addressee focus, the poet may have wanted to use it to draw attention to Wiglaf's addressees ('gesiðum'), his unhelpful companions. It does not seem a mere variation or repetition of 'maðelode'; it serves to highlight his addressees. The other instance of 'sægde', on the other hand, occurs in the nameless Messenger's speech, and here the verb undoubtedly serves to introduce direct speech:

Lyt swigode
niwra spella se ðe næs gerad,
ac he soðlice **sægde** ofer ealle (2897b–99)

[He left little of the new tidings unspoken, the man who rode to the headland, but truthfully declared in front of them all]

The following speech is the second longest in the poem (128 lines) and obviously very important to the Geats as it directly concerns their own fate. If the verb 'secgan' has message and addressee focus, the use of this *inquit* here is quite appropriate; it is the message itself and its implications for the hearers, not the speaker himself, that matters here. In the re-introductory passage after the speech, the poet refers to him as 'secgende':

Swa se secg hwata secggende wæs,
laðra spella (3028–29a)

[Thus the man was the teller of predictions and of the unwelcome tidings.][75]

The present participle form of 'secgan', maybe used as a verbal noun followed by the

[75] This translation is mine since the passage is interpreted differently by Bradley.

genitives ‘laðra spella [hateful tidings]’, means ‘teller’, as Mitchell and Robinson point out,[76] and I follow the suggestion by Fulk, Bjork, and Niles that ‘hwata’ should be taken as the genitive plural form of ‘hwatu’ [prediction] rather than as a weak adjective meaning ‘valiant’.[77] These two usages of ‘secgan’ before and after the speech show how the poet interpreted the meaning of the verb; the main focus of the verb is on the transmission of a massage to the listeners, not on the speaker.

There are eighteen instances of ‘secgan’ introducing indirect speech. Unlike ‘cweðan’ and ‘sprecan’, various forms of the verb are used (infinitive: 51, 391, 942, 1346, 1700, 1818, 2864, and 3026; inflected infinitive: 473 and 1724; 1st person singular present: 590; 3rd person plural present: 411; 3rd person singular preterite: 90, 1175, and 3152; 3rd person plural preterite: 377 and 1945; past participle: 1696). There is one instance of the prefixed form ‘gesecgan’ (imperative singular: 388). Most of these instances are notably used within speeches; only five are found in the narrative voice. Still, they are quite different from the quotative ‘cweðan’, except one in line 90. Two of them introduce indirect questions. One is found in the last part of the sea-burial of Scyld, the founder of the Danes:

> Men ne cunnon
> **secgan** to soðe, seleræden*d*e,
> hæleð under heofenum, hwa þæm hlæste onfeng. (50b–52)
> [Those men who dispense wisdom in the hall, worthies here below the heavens, were unable to say in truth who received that cargo.]

[76] Mitchell, and Robinson, note on 3028–9a, p. 155.
[77] Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, note on 3028 f., p. 263.

Here the verb ‘secgan’ preceded by ‘cunnon’ is not so much a verb of speech meaning ‘say’ as a verb meaning ‘see’ or ‘decide’. The subordinate clause ‘hwa þæm hlæste onfeng’ does not represent what someone utters. The other instance is used to tell about the inscription on the hilt of the sword which Beowulf hands to Hrothgar when he has returned from the mere of the monsters:

> Swa wæs on ðæm scennum sciran goldes
> þurh runstafas rihte gemearcod,
> geseted ond **gesæd**, hwam þæt sweord geworht,
> irena cyst ærest wære,
> wreoþenhilt ond wyrmfah. (1694–98a)

[Also on those shining plates of bright gold it was duly recorded in runic letters, set down and declared, for whom that sword, a most select iron weapon, with twist-formed hilt, dragon-decorated, was first forged.]

The subordinate clause again does not specify the actual words written on the hilt but the purport of the inscription. There are two instances with a ‘þæt’ clause (1945 and 3152). But those clauses also show the condensation of the information rather than the approximation of actual utterances. To cite an instance, which is found in the Offa episode told by the poet:

> ealodrincende oðer **sædan**,
> þæt hio leodbealewa læs gefremede,
> inwitniða (1945–47a)

[men supping their ale told another story: how she desisted from offences against the people]

In the following passage, the verb ‘cwæð’ is used in parallel variation with ‘sægde’.

Sægde se þe cuþe
frumsceaft fira feorran reccan,
cwæð þæt se ælmihtiga eorðan worh(te) … (90b–92)

[He who was skilled in recounting the creation of men in time distant declared that the Almighty made the earth …]

The subject of the verbs is the scop of Hrothgar. As Brodeur says that ‘[v]ariation of verbs of speaking is fairly frequent’ and variation is ‘the chief characteristic of the poetic mode of expression’,[78] this variation could only be a stylistic choice, but the speech of the scop can be regarded as both the reproduction of his actual words and the transmission of information. This combination of the verbs of speech, therefore, can be considered the poet’s intentional choice.

Most instances of ‘secgan’ are found within speeches, though none of them are used on the second narrative level. They can be categorized into three kinds: to transmit information to someone (388, 391, 590, 1175, and 1818), to tell what is generally said (377, 411, 942, 1346, 1700, and 2864), and to introduce an indirect question (473, 1724, and 3026). There is no instance to quote the actual words of some characters in the poem, though in some instances, the subject of the verb is a character. For example, Wulfgar, the herald of the king Hrothgar, tells Beowulf that the king welcomes him to his court:

‘Eow het **secgan** sigedrihten min,

[78] Brodeur, *Art*, p. 281 and p. 39.

aldor East-Dena, þæt he eower æþelu can …' (391–92)

['My victorious lord, king of the Danes, commands me to tell you that he is familiar with your parentage …']

Wulfgar does not repeat the king's actual words but transmits his message, paraphrasing what he has said in lines 372 to 389a. In the instances of the transmission of information, addressees are always present in the narrative. Another notable part the verb plays is to convey what is heard or rumour:

secgað sæliðend þæt þæs sele stande,
reced selesta rinca gehwylcum
idel ond unnyt … (411–13a)

[seafarers say that this hall, this most excellent building, stands desolate and useless to every warrior …]

Or to express what people might say:

'Þæt, la, **mæg secgan** se þe soð ond riht
fremeð on folce, feor eal gemon,
eald eþelweard, þæt ðes eorl wære
geboren betera …' (1700–03a)

['One who furthers truth and justice among the people, an aged guardian of the homeland who remembers everything from far back, is surely entitled to say this: that this earl was born a superior being…']

This use seems, to some extent, connected to Burrow's findings, as he says of the

present tense of 'seide' that all of them 'mark the fact that a pronouncement by some ancient authority, usually biblical, still speaks to us today'.[79] Here 'narrative levels', however, might give the misleading impression that we are dealing with extensive stories within stories, but what I have found about 'secgan' does not seem to have anything to do with the second narrative level because the verb is used just within speeches, not within stories embedded in speeches. I think it is related to the purpose of communication, as we pass information or knowledge to others by talking if writing is not available. It is therefore very natural that the verb is used within speeches if the poet distinguishes the two verbs: 'cweðan' suggests actual words, or how they are expressed, while 'secgan' suggests ideas, or contents, or what is said.

'Sprecan'

There are eight instances of the use of '-sprecan' as *inquit* introducing direct or indirect speech: six instances of 'spræc', one 'spræcon', and one 'gespræc'. Five out of the seven instances which introduce direct speech are used in parallel variation with other verbs of speech; this is the most salient feature perceived in the use of the three *inquits* in the poem. Only one instance is used to introduce indirect speech (1595, see above). The poet's use of '-sprecan' is also in accord with Goossens's characterization of this verb: it has the primary focus on the verbal action itself, not on the message, frequently used with manner adverbials.

First, I shall look at the instances of 'spræc' in parallel variation with other *inquits*. The five instances are:

1. Him þa ellenrof andswarode,
   wlanc Wedera leod, word æfter **spræc**,

[79] Burrow, '"Quod" and "Seide" in "Piers Plowman"', p. 522.

heard under helme (340–42a)

[The proud leader of the Weder-Geats, renowned for his valour, answered; looking stern in his helmet, he said these words in reply]

2. Wealhðeo maþelode; heo fore þæm werede **spræc** (1215)

[Wealhtheow spoke out and in the presence of that great assembly said]

3. Hroðgar maðelode …

Ða se wisa **spræc**

sunu Healfdenes; swigedon ealle (1687–99)

[Hrothgar spoke forth … So the wise son of Healfdene spoke, and all kept silence]

4. Beowulf maðelode, beotwordum **spræc**

niehstan siðe (2510–11a)

[Beowulf spoke out and uttered pledge-plighting words for the last time]

5. Biowulf maþelode — he ofer benne **spræc**,

wunde wælbleate (2724–25a)

[Beowulf held forth; despite his injury, the grievous mortal wound, he spoke]

In these instances, 'spræc' is invariably placed at the end of the b-verse where the word does not involve alliteration, but the constructions of each verbal variation are notably various. When the words or phrases preceding the verb are looked at, there are an accusative noun (passage 1), a personal pronoun with a prepositional phrase (passages 2 and 5), a substantive adjective (passage 3), and a dative noun (passage

4). The poet uses the verb to elaborate freely on the speaker or the situation. In passage 1, for example, it serves to tell us about the speaker's appearance 'heard under helme', while in passage 3, it serves to remind us of who the speaker is, for there are unusually long intervening lines between the initial *inquit* 'maþelode' (1687a) and the onset of the actual speech (1700). Robinson calls this syntactic construction clausal apposition — he uses the term, extending the meaning of apposition to include restatements not only of nouns but also of adjectives, verbs, phrases, and clauses. He notes that these clausal appositions in *Beowulf* 'are not merely tautological but rather supply various kinds of information'.[80] As he states, the poet adds more descriptions to the speaker and setting where the speech is made, but he does not vary the *inquit* itself and repeatedly uses 'spræc'.

Variation of verbs of speech is not uncommon in Old English poetry. Michiko Ogura provides a table of the combination of *variatum* (the word to be varied, or the one that appears first) and *varians* (the word to vary) in the whole corpus of Old English poetry.[81] According to her survey, 'cweðan' and 'secgan' are used more frequently as *varians* than 'sprecan': 'cweðan' is used fifty times, 'secgan' forty-four times and 'sprecan' twenty-six times.[82] The *Beowulf* poet uses only three *varians* with parallel variation with 'maþelode': 'spræc', 'sægde' (2632, see above) and 'onband beadurune' (501). His preference for 'spræc' over other verbs of speech as *varians* is evident. According to Goossens, 'sprecan' is frequently used with manner adverbials. Therefore, if the poet uses the verb to describe the speaker, it seems quite appropriate. It is possible that the poet chose the combination of the *inquits* according to their different functions: the verbs 'andswarode' and 'maþelode' serve

[80] Robinson, *Appositive Style*, pp. 19–20.
[81] She uses these terms following Robinson: 'Variation: A Study in the Diction of *Beowulf*' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of North Carolina, 1961), pp. 16–17, in *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global*, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/302061702/> [accessed 26 September 2016].
[82] Ogura, p. 116.

as actual verbs of speech, focusing on the nature of following direct speech: 'give an answer' and 'make a formal speech', while 'spræc' serves as a verb of vocal action to add more information on the subject or the circumstance in which the subject is about to speak.

The *Beowulf* poet uses '-sprecan' twice as a single *inquit* to introduce direct speech: one of Wealhtheow's speeches and a speech of Beowulf. The poet seems to choose the *inquit* specifically to describe successive actions, focusing on the actor, or the speaker. Here again, the verb is related to the act of speaking. The first speech of Wealhtheow is made at the celebrating feast after Beowulf has defeated Grendel. Carrying a cup, the queen talks to her husband Hrothgar, who is sitting next to his nephew Hrothulf. The introduction is short:

> Þa cwom Wealhþeo forð
> gan under gyldnum beage þær þa godan twegen
> sæton suhtergefæderan …
>
> **Spræc** ða ides Scyldinga (1162b–68b)
>
> [Then Wealhtheow stepped forward and went, wearing a gold crown, to where those two worthy men were sitting, uncle and nephew … Then said the lady of the Scyldings]

After letting the queen enter the scene, the poet briefly explains the relationship between Hrothgar and the nephew and also mentions Unferth, who is sitting near them. It is, therefore, necessary to state who is going to speak, and the *inquit* which has focus on verbal action appropriately plays the role, describing her successive action: the queen comes and speaks. In addition, the poet might have emphasized the speaker by using this verb. Queens' usual roles at such a feast are walking

around, pouring dinks graciously; speaking is more than her customary roles. She does not speak unless she has reasons to speak up. Her speech shows us that she cares deeply about her own young children. The verb draws our attention to the speaker. The other instance can also be considered to serve to describe successive actions, while it is also focusing on the speaker:

> Ða he him of dyde isernbyrnan,
> helm of hafelan, sealde his hyrsted sweord,
> irena cyst, ombihtþegne,
> ond gehealdan het hildegeatwe.
> **Gespræc** þa se goda gylpworda sum,
> Beowulf Geata, ær he on bed stige (671–76)

[when he took off his iron mail-coat and his helmet from his head, gave his ornamented sword, the most select of weapons, to his servitor-thane and enjoined him to take care of his battel-gear. Then that worthy, Beowulf of the Geats, before he climbed into bed, made a notable pledge.]

This introduces Beowulf's speech in which he declares that he will fight with Grendel without arms and armour. Here a series of movements of the hero is depicted by using the different four verbs 'dyde', 'sealde', 'het', and 'gespræc' paratactically in a relatively short passage. This use of the verb is in a sense similar to 'cweðan' in that they introduce the actual words of the speaker in a less formal situation. In addition, the construction is also similar: the accusative nominal phrase 'gylpworda sum' is appositive to direct speech. However, unlike 'cweðan', whose primary focus is on the message or the speaker's actual words, it is more appropriate to use '-sprecan' which has more focus on verbal action itself and the speaker himself.

The verbs ‘cweðan’, ‘sprecan’, and ‘secgan’ certainly share some common features as a verb of speech, but each of them also has its own distinct properties. It seems certain that these common verbs of speech in *Beowulf* are employed in accord with their properties. According to Goossens’ generalisations about ‘cweðan’ and ‘secgan’, though both verbs have message focus, direct speech is the ‘favoured territory’ of ‘cweðan’, since ‘cweðan’ is used to introduce utterances close to the actual words spoken.[83] Although ‘maþelian’ is also used exclusively to introduce direct speech, the poet distinguishes between the verbs ‘cweðan’ and ‘maþelian’ in use; he uses ‘cweðan’ to introduce speeches in which speakers express less public or more personal matters. The poet’s use of the verb ‘secgan’ shows that its main focus is on the contents of a message, which is sometimes condensed or paraphrased, and its transmission to addressees; it is used mostly within the characters’ speeches. The verb ‘sprecan’ is the most peculiar of the three. In *Beowulf*, although the verb is not used with adverbs of manner, it is evident that the poet uses it to elaborate introductions to speeches. Examining the speech-introductory passages both in *Beowulf* and in *Elene*, Lord notes that ‘Cynewulf varies the verbs of speaking more than either the *Beowulf* poet or the Latin does’, and declares that ‘Cynewulf prefers variety’.[84] The *Beowulf* poet certainly does not ‘prefer variety’ but seems to choose the verbs of speech in such a manner as appropriate for a normal narrative context. In his analysis of these three Old English verbs and the four presen-day English verbs ‘speak’, ‘talk’, ‘say’ and ‘tell’, Goossens concludes that ‘sprecan’ is more similar to ‘speak’, ‘cweðan’ to ‘say’ and ‘secgan’ to ‘tell’, but the Old English verbs do not have the same specificity that the present-day English verbs do.[85] As far as *Beowulf* is concerned, however, the verbs

[83] Goosens, p. 169.
[84] Lord, *Epic Singers*, p. 165.
[85] Goossens, pp. 169–70. On the semantic development of English verbs of speech, see

'cweðan', 'sprecan', and 'secgan' have distinguishable traits.

Minor verbs of speech: 'abead', 'gegrette' and 'het'

As I have pointed out, there is a noticeable pattern in the use of verbs of speech in *Beowulf*: for most speeches, one of the common *inquits*, which have been examined above (i.e., 'frignan', 'andswarian', 'maþelian', '-cweðan', '-sprecan', and 'secgan'), is used. There are only five speech-introductory passages that do not contain any of the above *inquits*: the verbs or verb phrases appearing in the five instances are three verbs, 'abead' [announced] (390b), 'gegrette' [greeted] (2516a) and 'het' [commanded] (2152a, 2812b and 3110a) and two periphrases, 'gyd … wræc' [made a speech] (2154b) and 'wordes ord breosthord þurhbræc' [the point of word broke through his breast] (2791b–92a). Interestingly, there are two distinct circumstances that may be significant with regard to these passages. One is the apparent defectivenss of the text; some lines seem to be missing before half-line 390b and after half-line 2792a. The other is the position of the speeches they introduce: the passages devoid of a common verb of speech introduce those speeches which are the last part of sequential speeches (this will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3). I will examine the verbs 'abead', 'gegrette' and 'het' here and the two periphrases in the next section with the other periphrases.

'Abead'

Shippey regards the *inquit* 'word abead' as one of the 'relatively opaque expressions' among the *inquits* in *Beowulf*, but it seems possible that the verb has a

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also Ogura; on the semantic and sytactic difference between the verbs 'to say' and 'to tell', see Sonia Baghdikian, 'To Say and To Tell in Present-Day British English', *Studia Neophilologica*, 49 (1977), 3–18.

specific sense, that is, 'announced an authoritative message', not simply 'spoke words' and in this sense it would suit the contexts well.[86] The verb is employed to introduce a speech by the herald Wulfgar (390b) when he conveys Hrothgar's message to Beowulf and his men:

> [Wedera leodum] word inne **abead**:
> 'Eow het secgan sigedrihten min …' (390–91)
> [(so Wulfgar) announced words inside to the Geatish people. 'My victorious lord commanded me to tell you …'][87]

Editors usually assume that at least two half-lines (389b and 390a) were missing before the *inquit* formula 'word inne abead' (for further discussion, see Chapter 3). Although there is no explicit subject of the verb, it is obvious from the situation that the subject is the herald Wulfgar. I would like to suggest that the *inquit* designates the formality of the herald's announcement: Wulfgar is formally announcing a message authorized by the king. The herald's speech is formal and ceremonial.

To illustrate this point, it is necessary to consider the other instances of the verb in the corpus. The verb 'abead' (the third-person singular form of 'abeodan') appears four times in *Beowulf* and only one of them serves as an *inquit*. The other three appear in line 653b, where the king Hrothgar wishes good luck ('hæl abead') to Beowulf, who is going to face Grendel, in line 2418a, where the king Beowulf salutes ('hælo abead') his companions when he is about to fight against the dragon and in line 668b, where Beowulf offers guard against the giant, i.e., Grendel ('eotonweard

[86] Shippey, 'Principles', p. 109.
[87] The translation of the four half-lines is mine, since Bradley's departs from the text I quote. Raymond P. Tripp, Jr points out that the word 'inne' cannot mean 'from within' since '[t]he poet uses *innan* for the directional sense': 'Wulfgar at the Door? A Literary Solution to *Beowulf* 389–90', *English Language Notes,* 29 (1992), 1–9 (p. 5).

abead'). The glossary to the text gives the verb 'abead' the definition 'offer', which seems sufficient for the four instances in the poem.[88] However, the definition does not denote the formal sense of the verb. *BT*, on the other hand, defines the meaning of the verb as 'announce, relate, declare, offer, command', and the dictionary adds a detailed supplementary entry to the verb. The entry has six sub-entries: 1. to announce, declare a message, 2. to announce what is coming, 3. (in formulae of greeting) to bid farewell ('hǽl ábeódan') to hail, 4. to announce what may be accepted, 5. to announce what is to be obeyed, and 6. to summon, call out. Though it is divided into six sub-entries, most of the existing instances suggest that the verb is related to one common concept: to announce an authoritative or solemn statement.

The subject of the verb seems to cause subtle differences to its meaning of the verb. In *Genesis A*, there is an instance where it is used to introduce a speech by God when He passes his verdict on Adam, who has broken God's command not to eat a fruit from the tree of death:

> **Abead** eac adame ece drihten,
> lifes leohtfruma, lað ærende:
> "þu scealt oðerne eðel secean,
> wynleasran wic, and on wræc hweorfan
> nacod niedwædla neorxnawanges,
> dugeðum bedæled. þe is gedal witod
> lices and sawle …" (925–31a)

[To Adam also the eternal Lord, the radiant Lord of life, announced unwelcome tidings: 'You are to seek out another homeland, a dwelling-place devoid of

[88] The third edition has the definition 'announce', so the editors of the fourth edition has omitted it.

happiness, and wander in exile, a naked and needy destitute deprived of the privileges of Paradise; divorce of body and soul is ordained for you …']

In *The Battle of Maldon*, on the other hand, it is used to introduce the speech by the Viking messenger:

Þa stod on stæðe, stiðlice clypode
wicinga ar, wordum mælde,
se on beot **abead** brimliþendra
ærænde to þam eorle, þær he on ofre stod:
"Me sendon to þe sæmen snelle,
heton ðe secgan þæt þu most sendan raðe
beagas wið gebeorge …" (25–31a)

[Then there appeared at the waterside and fiercely shouted out a messenger from the vikings who swaggeringly announced a message from the ocean-wanderers to the earl where he was standing on the foreshore. 'Bold seamen have sent me to you. They have bidden me tell you that you must speedily send rings in return for protection …']

This is a scene of a serious negotiation in war. Bryhtnoth, the leader, rejects to accept the conditions offered by the Vikings and tells the messenger to pass his message, using the imperative form of the verb, 'Brimmanna boda, | **abeod** eft ongean' [Seamen's spokesmen, report back again'] (49). Although there are only a few instances of this verb used to introduce direct speech in the corpus, the verb in the other instances is almost always employed when God gives some commands or an angel announces His messages; in *Genesis A*, for example, Noah and every chosen

creature go into the ark 'swa him ælmihtig / weroda drihten | þurh his word **abead**' [just as the Almighty, the Lord of the multitudes, enjoined him by his word] (1361b–62) or in *Elene*, the verb is used to convey the way an angel gives a message to the king Constantine: 'swa him se ar **abead**' [as the messenger had bidden him] (87b). In most cases, the verb is used to convey a message from a person in the highest position of the community, whether the subject of the verb is the authoritative person himself or his messenger. It is worth noting that all three instances of the formulaic greeting 'hæl abeodan' in the corpus are used by kings: Hrothgar, Beowulf, and Constantine in *Elene* (1002b–03a).

The use of the verb in the corpus thus strongly suggests that when the *inquit* 'word abead' is used to introduce a speech by a messenger, it means 'announce an authoritative message', not simply 'say words': Wulfgar, as a king's herald, solemnly announced Hrothgar's message to the Geats. The possible defects in the text certainly make it impossible to know whether this *inquit* was originally appositive with another *inquit* formula or not. Since the verb 'abead' is sometimes, though not typically, used to introduce direct speech, nothing justifies the assumption that any missing part before the *inquit* 'abead' contained another common verb of speech, but I am still inclined to think it quite possible that it was originally appositive with the 'maþelode' formula, taking account of the formality of Wulfgar's speech.

'Gegrette' and 'het'

The verbs 'gegrette' and 'het' are used to introduce the last part of sequential speeches. In *Beowulf*, there are four sequential speeches which the same speaker delivers to the same addressee(s) in the same place, three by Beowulf and one by Wiglaf: Beowulf reports his adventure in Denmark to his lord Hygelac and gives him the gifts that Hrothgar has bestowed him (2000–2151 and 2155–62); the king

Beowulf addresses his companions just before his fight with the dragon (2426–2509, 2511b–15, and 2518b–37); and he makes his final speeches after he defeats the dragon (2794–2808 and 2813–16); Wiglaf conveys Beowulf's last moments to his companions and tells them how his funeral is to be arranged (3077–3109 and 3114b–19). All these sequential speeches can be seen as a unit. I will discuss these sequential speeches in relation to the metrical line of direct speech in Chapter 3. Here I would like to consider the passages before speeches which do not contain common *inquits*.

It can be pointed out that the use of *inquits* in the four series of speeches follows the same pattern. The first speech of each sequence is introduced by 'maþelode' – except Beowulf's last sequence of speeches (2794–2808 and 2813–16), where a part of the introduction to the initial speech seems defective. All of the final speeches, on the other hand, are introduced by an uncommon *inquit*, that is, 'Het … gyd æfter wræc' (2152–54), 'Gegrette' (2516a) and 'het' (2812b and 3110a). This does not seem merely coincidental (see Chapter 3). The use of the uncommon *inquits* in the last part of the sequential speeches seems to be a device to insert actions which happen between the speeches as a natural course and to finish the sequence of speeches without breaking the topical unity.

The first sequence of speeches by the hero may be slightly different from the others in that it has another clear periphrastic *inquit* 'gyd æfter wræc', though it is not one of the common verbs of speech. At the end of his report of his exploits in Denmark to Hygelac, Beowulf expresses his wish to present gifts to Hygelac:

> '… ða ic ðe, beorncyning, bringan wylle,
> estum geywan. Gen is eall æt ðe
> lissa gelong; ic lyt hafo

heafodmaga nefne, Hygelac, ðec.' (2148–51)

['… These, warrior-king, I want to bring and present to you as loving gifts. Still the fulfilment of my joys depends upon you: I have few close kinsmen but you, Hygelac.']

Then he gives a command to bring the treasures:

Het ða in beran eaforheafodsegn,
heaðosteapne helm, hare byrnan,
guðsweord geatolic, gyd æfter wræc (2152–54)

[So he commanded the boar to be carried in, the high standard, the helmet towering in battle, the grey mail-coat and the splendid war-sword; then he completed his story.]

His report ends with his explanation of the origin of those treasures. Certainly, his order to bring the treasures is necessary to describe the natural course of events, which enables his speech to reach the concluding part where the origin of the treasures is revealed. The periphrasis 'gyd … wræc' serves suitably to mark the importance of the speech (see below).

In the other three instances, the passages including the verbs 'het' and 'gegrette' function in a similar way. After expressing his formal pledge before the fight with the dragon, Beowulf greets his companions:

Gegrette ða gumena gehwylcne,
hwate helmberend hindeman siðe,
swæse gesiðas: 'Nolde ic sweord beran,

wæpen to wyrme, gif ic wiste hu

wið ðam aglæcean elles meahte

gylpe wiðgripan, swa ic gio wið Grendle dyde …' (2516–21)

[Then for the last time he greeted each one of the bold, helmet-wearing men, his dearly-held companions: 'I would not wish to carry a sword as weapon against the reptile if I knew how, otherwise, I could to my renown wrestle with the monster, as once I did with Grendel …']

Now he is going to tell his companions how he is going to fight the dragon. The following speech is not a 'greeting', and therefore, the verb 'gegrette' here may not be a pure *inquit*.[89] These lines, parenthetically inserted between the speeches, serve well to change gears; in the first speech, Beowulf reviews his life and remembers his prowess and in the second, he declares his formal pledge; now he focuses more on the immediate battle. This short passage between his second and the last serves to move his speech more naturally towards the matter directly related to his last battle. It is noteworthy that the other two uses of this verb in the narrative voice are comparable in situations: one is used when Hrothgar goes to bed before Beowulf's fight with Grendel (652a), and the other when Hygelac welcomes back Beowulf, who has just returned home from Denmark (1979b). Hrothgar 'gegrette' Beowulf, who is going to undertake a dangerous fight; Hygelac – if he is supposed to be the subject of the verb (see above) – 'gegrette' Beowulf, who has survived two dangerous fights; and Beowulf 'gegrette' his companions before he undertakes a dangerous fight again. In all cases, the verb is used to express a formal and serious salutation.

The same thing seems true of the verb 'het' used in the remaining sequential

[89] *The Dictionary of Old English* gives the word here a specific meaning: 'to salute for the last time, bid farewell to, express parting salutations to, take leave of'.

speeches. Before Beowulf dies, he hands the treasures he has worn to Wiglaf.

Dyde him of healse hring gyldenne
þioden þristhydig, þegne gesealde,
geongum garwigan, goldfahne helm,
beah ond byrnan, **het** hyne brucan well (2809–12)

[From his neck the intrepid prince took the gold collar and gave it, and his helmet agleam with gold, his ring and his mail-coat to the young spear-wielding warrior, his thane, and charged him to use them well]

The hero's last speech follows this passage.

Het ða gebeodan byre Wihstanes,
hæle hildedior hæleða monegum,
boldagendra, þæt hie bælwudu
feorran feredon, folcagende,
godum togenes (3110–14a)

[So Weohstan's son, the brave hero of the fight, commanded them to proclaim it to the many men having rule over a hall that they, the people's rulers, should come carrying wood for the pyre to the good man's side]

The very last passage of direct speech by Wiglaf follows this passage. He talks about how fire will consume his king. Those parenthetical descriptions of the speakers' acitions between their speeches serve to move the speeches naturally towards the concluding words without disrupting the topical coherence of the series of speeches.[90]

[90] Gerald Richman sees these three cases (1983b–98, 2809–16, and 3110–19) in

In Old English poems, *inquit* formulae before direct speech is the norm.[91] Like 'gegrette', 'het' is the only verb which denote verbal activity in the above two speech-introductory passages, and thus both must be taken as the *inquit*. However, neither 'het' or 'gegrette' seems to have been used to introduce direct speech. The verb 'het' is employed very frequently in the corpus: there are 109 instances recorded in *Concordance*, but none of them are used to introduce direct speech, except those in *Beowulf*.[92] The verb 'gegretan' is used four times in *Beowulf*: except the one which is the infinitive form with 'sceal' within the parting speech by Hrothgar to the Geats (1861), three are the third person singular preterite form (652, 1979, and 2516), and the scenes in which they are used suggest that they are verbal exchanges of greeting.[93] Though there is no instance elsewhere in the corpus where the verb is used to introduce direct speech, Beowulf's speech in question does not have any other verb of speech and therefore it seems to serve as one.[94] The poet seems to have used these verbs as quasi-*inquits*, making use of verbs donating verbal activities, that is, oral greetings or commands, to show that the same person is still speaking. Between the speeches, the speaker is doing something departing from the previous speech but that is still necessary to tell the story in the natural course of events. The parenthetical passages between the speeches effectively serve to move the narrative smoothly on while serving to present the sequence as a unit, which normal *inquit* formulae might not.

The introductory passages which do not contain one of the common *inquits* thus have reasons for departure from the pattern. While there is no way to know whether

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Beowulf as 'slipping': 'Artful Slipping in Old English', *Neophilologus*, 70 (1986), 279–91.
[91] Louviot, *Direct Speech*, p. 44.
[92] There is an instance of 'het' which introduces indirect speech in *Beowulf* (2156).
[93] Orchard lists the verb in line 652 as an introductory verb: *Companion*, p. 206.
[94] 'Grette' is used to introduce direct speech in *The Descent into Hell* (58).

'word abead' was the only *inquit* for Wulfgar's announcement, the use of the uncommon *inquits* 'gegrette' and 'het' seems likely to be intentional. It is possible that it was the poet's own device to present the sequential speeches as a unit.

Periphrases as *inquits*

In addition to common verbs of speech, such as 'maþelode' or 'cwæð', the *Beowulf* poet uses four periphrases to introduce direct speech. Those periphrases are: wordhord onleac (259b); onband beadurune (501a); gyd … wræc (2154b); wordes ord / breosthord þurhbræc (2791b–92a). They are used only once in the poem. Whereas the periphrasis 'gyd … wræc' stands alone as an *inquit*, 'wordhord onleac' and 'onband beadourune' are used in parallel variation with another verb of speech, 'andswarode' and 'maþelode' respectively. The expression 'wordes ord breosthord þurhbræc' may not be an *inquit* (see below), yet it is clear that this expression tells us the dying hero is about to give a speech. I therefore include it here. I hope to show how the *Beowulf* poet suits his periphrases to the occasion and to the character and his state of mind.

'Wordhord onleac'

The *Beowulf* poet uses the periphrasis 'wordhord onleac' to introduce the very first speech of the hero Beowulf:

> Him se yldesta andswarode,
> werodes wisa, wordhord onleac (258–59)
> [The chief, the leader of the contingent, answered him and opened a treasury of words]

The expression, literally meaning 'unlocked his word-hoard', may have been a formulaic expression meaning 'spoke' or 'said'.[95] *Concordance* records six instances of the compound 'wordhord', all of which are interestingly used with a verb meaning 'open'; five of them are used with the verb 'onleac', as in the passage above (*Andreas* (316 and 601); *Widsith* (1), *The Meters of Boethius: Meter 6* (1)), and the remaining one is used with the verb 'onwreah' (*Vainglory* (3)).[96] Since all the instances of the verbal phrase 'wordhord onleac' serve to introduce direct speech in the corpus, it is possible that the phrase was in fact a traditional figurative expression acting as an *inquit*. Furthermore, it seems to have been used specifically for a certain personage. Britt Mize points out that the compound 'wordhord' is never used for an evil person nor refers to 'improper thoughts'.[97] It can therefore be assumed that the poet selected the periphrasis to denote his hero's excellence in character, not simply to vary the verb 'andswarode'. In addition to Mize's observation, the situations in which the periphrasis is used are also worth considering; it is always used in unusual social situations. I will discuss the meaning of the periphrasis and show how its use for the first speech of Beowulf is appropriate to the situation. Before I do so, however, it is appropriate to consider what other scholars have said about the periphrasis 'wordhord onleac'.

Mize points out that there are quite a few compounds similar to 'wordhord', such as 'breostcofa', 'breosthord', or 'hordloca', but each of these words is not commonly used in the poetic corpus and several are used only once.[98] Therefore, even five occurrences of the phrase 'wordhord onleac' can be regarded as unusually frequent.

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[95] Brodeur points out that the compounds 'breosthord' and 'wordhord' are traditional kennings: *Art*, pp. 260–61.
[96] *Concordance*, p. 1461. There is a genitive singular form 'wordhordes' found in *The Order of the World* (19).
[97] Britt Mize, 'The Representation of the Mind as an Enclosure in Old English Poetry', *Anglo-Saxon England* 35 (2007), 57–90 (pp.70–71).
[98] Mize, p. 59 and p. 71.

The compound 'wordhord' alone has drawn more attention. Examining the role of the word '-hord' in *Beowulf* in the light of its thematic significance, Martin Stevens suggests that the compound 'wordhord' means 'the poetic vocabulary, the treasure house of words from which the poet draws to recite his song'. He sees Beowulf's words here as a treasure, suggesting that 'the poem achieves a far deeper poetic unity' through the poet's use of *hord*. He states:

> The linkage of *hord* both with gold and with language is of central importance to the poet's vision of the universe, for through this dual sense of *hord*, he suggests that words themselves are a treasure which yields to the principle that also governs material life: a healthy world is one in which goods and words are exchanged, where there is flow and animation, and where life is defined by its "give and take."[99]

If the poet sees words as treasure to give away, as Stevens maintains, the expression 'wordhord onleac' has to be considered as more than a decorative expression serving as a figurative expression with some significance for the poem. But he does not explain why this particular speech of the hero is regarded as 'poetic'. Because Stevens thinks that the poet characterises the hero as a *scop* throughout Part 1 of the poem, which depicts the adventures in Beowulf's youth,[100] he may consider this periphrasis as part of a characterisation of the hero as a poet. He says that the hero emerges 'not only as a man of action but also speaker'.[101] Certainly, a powerful leader needs such rhetorical skills as a *scop* does. Stevens comments on Beowulf's

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[99] Martin Stevens, 'The Structure of Beowulf from Gold-Hoard to Word-Hoard', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 39 (1978), 219–38 (p. 220).
[100] Part 1 of the poem refers to lines 1 to 2199, and Part 2, which depicts the old king Beowulf and his death, to lines 2200 to 3182.
[101] Stevens, p. 234.

speech at Hygelac's court (2000–2151): 'The hero becomes poet, and in emulating his literary creator, he stands at the apex of his career.'[102] This interpretation is not very convincing, however; it is true that the hero's speech at lines 2000 to 2151 may well be compared to a tale or song related by a *scop* in the royal court, but it is not unusual in epics that the hero or a king recount his own adventures, just as Odysseus (Books 9–12) or Menelaus (Book 4) do in the *Odyssey*, for example, nor would this explain why the phrase 'wordhord onleac' is used for the very first speech of the hero, if, as Stevens argues, he is about to learn rhetorical skills from Hrothgar. It would be more appropriate, if the periphrasis were used for Beowulf's recounting of his adventures in the land of the Danes in front of his king, Hygelac. It may well be the case that the periphrasis here does not primarily serve to characterise the hero, but rather responds to the particular situation in which Beowulf finds himself.

Eric Jager, who claims that the poem has 'pectoral' themes and imagery in its centre, sees the phrase in the context of the poem's presentation of its themes. He states that 'pectoral speech is first suggested with Beowulf's first speech, when, in replying to the Danish coast guard, he is described as unlocking his word-hoard'.[103] He suggests that 'Beowulf's unlocked word-hoard thus may be seen as inaugurating the theme of pectoral speech in the poem'. Certainly, there seems to be a significant connection between this periphrasis and the last one in terms of 'breast' (assuming that 'word-hord' also implies 'breast'), but when the other verbs of speech in the poem are taken account of, the connection between the breast and speech is not so conspicuous.

Britt Mize approaches the word differently. He analyses the compound in the light of metaphoric uses in Old English poetry. He states that '*wordhord* may be

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[102] Stevens, p. 236.
[103] Eric Jager, 'Speech and the Chest in Old English Poetry: Orality or Pectorality?', *Speculum*, 65 (1990), 845–59 (p.849).

understood as a kenning for the mind itself', suggesting that a 'wordhord' does not merely denote 'vocabulary', but means 'a container full of thoughts', which its possessor can 'unlock' in the act of speech.[104] Observing that 'it never belongs to a wicked character or contains improper thoughts', he concludes that '"wordhord" is the store not just of any potential discourse, but specifically of wisdom or understanding'. This interpretation is certainly applicable to the use of the phrase in *Widsith, The Meters of Boethius,* or *Vainglory*. However, it does not fit *Beowulf* so well; the hero just answers what the coastguard asks. In fact, Mize himself states that the phrase in *Beowulf* is used 'for Beowulf's diplomatic reply to the coastguard's challenge'.[105] I agree that 'wordhord' implies 'mind', but it is necessary to examine the noun in the context of the verb. Given that the phrase 'wordhord onleac' is exclusively used to introduce direct speech, I would consider the whole phrase to have a meaning close to 'open one's mind' in modern English, or, more precisely, 'open one's mind by communicating in words'.

As Mize observes, the periphrasis is never used for an evil character to disclose his wicked thoughts. As far as the existing poems are concerned, this is true and, moreover, the addresser is superior to the addressee in a certain quality, such as the faculty of judgement or wisdom, for example. In *Andreas*, one instance (316) is used to introduce a speech of the apostle Andreas, the hero of the poem, when he talks to God or Christ. Here God is disguised as a sailor, though Andreas is not aware of the fact yet, so he can be seen as superior to his addressee. On the other occasion (601), it is used to introduce a speech of God, who talks to Andreas. It is noteworthy that another similar phrase 'modhord onleac [unlocked his heart's treasury] (172)' is also used when God speaks to Andreas for the first time. *Widsith*, which consists of a long

[104] Mize, p.70.
[105] Mize, p. 70.

monologue of the scop Widsith, starts with the line: 'Widsið maðolade, | wordhord onleac' [Widsith spoke forth, and unlocked the treasury of his words]. Widsith is a scop who has widely travelled and obtained a broad knowledge of history and brilliant skills of songs, by which he has gained treasures from kings in return of his deep knowledge. In *The Meters of Boethius*, the periphrasis is used to introduce a song of Wisdom, corresponding to Philosophia of the Latin *Consolatio Philosophiae*. In *Vainglory*, the subject of the phrase 'wordhord onwreah' (3) is described as 'frod wita' [a wise man] (1), 'snottor ar' [a sagacious messenger] (2), or 'beorn boca gleaw' [a man learned of books] (4). In all the instances, the periphrasis introduces speeches by someone superior to his addressee. Furthermore, it can be said that the addressees benefit from communicating with their addressers, and the addressers are well aware of whom they are speaking to: a superior personage talks to a person or people he chooses to build relationship with. The phrase thus indicates speech from a source from which one could not count on communication being entered into and is equivalent to 'entered into communication' where such communication is not predictable.

In *Beowulf*, the periphrasis is employed to introduce the first speech of the hero. It is important to note that, for the Coastguard, the first Dane who confronts a group of strangers in armour, Beowulf and his companions can be potential deadly enemies who could not be expected to give a civil answer to a question. In this situation, the hero's act of answering to the Coastguard is also important, indicating the speaker's open-mindedness or social negotiability. His act of speaking itself seems to relieve the tension between the two parties. It almost functions as a boon to the Coastguard. Moreover, at this point, the poet has not told us much of Beowulf, nor has he revealed the hero's name yet; he just says that he 'wæs moncynnes | mægenes strengest / on þæm dæge | þysses lifes, / æþele ond eacen' [was in strength the sturdiest of

humankind at that time in this mortal existence, nobly born and of a physique beyond the ordinary] (196–98a). If this periphrasis was used for a splendid person, it must have served to differentiate him from other characters. It is also significant in this context that he is here called the chief of the group: 'se yldesta' (258a) and 'werodes wisa' (259a). This periphrasis thus appropriately serves not only to establish a bond between the Geats and the Coastguard but also to reveal the hero's status.

'Wordes ord breosthord þurhbræc'

The expression 'wordes ord breosthord þurhbræc' (2791b–92a) is syntactically different from the other periphrases 'wordhord onleac' and 'onband beadourune'; these periphrases are used in parallel variation with another verb of speech, while 'wordes ord breosthord þurhbræc' is a clause led by the conjunction 'oð þæt' (2791b). It is employed in the lines preceding the last speech of Beowulf:

he hine eft ongon
wæteres weorpan, oð þæt **wordes ord**
breosthord þurhbræc.
[Biorncyning spræc]
gomel on gio*h*ðe, gold sceawode (2790b–93)

[Again he (Wiglaf) began to sprinkle him (Beowulf) with water until the point of word broke through his breast. The warrior-king, the old man in his pain, spoke, watching the gold.][106]

[106] This translation is mine, as the text and Bradley's translation are different.

As is seen above, it has generally been considered that the b-verse after the half -line 'breosthord þurhbræc' is missing, and the phrase 'wordes ord breosthord þurhbræc' therefore may not be a genuine *inquit*. Most editors assume that the missing line contains a verb of speech, while some insist that no emendation should be required, as the text makes sense without it. John D. Niles, who considers that no verse has been omitted here, states: 'The absence of an alliterating b-verse to respond to 2792a can be taken as signaling an appropriate dramatic pause.'[107] This assumption is certainly persuasive; the hero who has just come to would need time to utter words. The phrase 'wordes ord breosthord þurhbræc' certainly tells us of the hero's struggle. Still I am inclined to think that a line or lines were probably omitted, especially taking into account the poet's usual way of introducing direct speech, which I discuss later. In either case, it is evident that these lines inform us that the hero is about to speak.

The compounds 'wordhord' and 'breosthord' share the same concept 'the mind as enclosure', which Mize points out.[108] This helps us to understand the expression better. It is not an ordinary container but something like a strongbox, lockable and difficult to open, unless the owner opens it. Beowulf, who has been in a swoon, is now having great trouble opening his mind by uttering words from his badly wounded body. This expression vividly and graphically conveys his physical suffering; he has to use some pointed weapon to break through his breast to speak to Wiglaf. It also emphasizes the importance of what the king wants to say before he dies: he wants to thank God for letting him gain treasures for his people and to tell Wiglaf how to conduct his funeral and where to bury him – this links back to the burial of the mythical founder Scyld at the very beginning of the poem: people prepare his funeral

[107] John D Niles, 'Editing *Beowulf*: What Can Study of the Ballads Tell Us?', *Oral Tradition*, 9 (1994), 440–67 (p. 455).
[108] Mize, p. 70.

as he has commanded while he has still had the power of speech: 'swa he selfa bæd / þenden wordum weold' [as he had himself commanded while he … owned the power of speech] (29b–30a).

'Onband beadurune'

As we have seen above, the periphrasis 'onband beadurune' is used to introduce the speech of Unferth, a retainer of Hrothgar, in parallel variation with another verb of speech, 'maþelode':

> *U*nferð maþelode, Ecglafes bearn,
> þe æt fotum sæt frean Scyldinga,
> **onband beadurune**. (499–501a)
> [Unferth, Ecglaf's son, who sat at the feet of the lord of the Scyldings, spoke out and unloosed provocative imputations.]

The compound 'beadurune' is a unique instance found nowhere else in Old English poetry. The phrase 'onband beadurune' is comparable with another periphrasis 'wordhord onleac' and may well be coined on that model especially to describe Unferth's hostile manner of speech. I would like to suggest that it serves not only to reveal Unferth's character in an original way but also to highlight a contrast in character between Beowulf and the Danish thane by making it a contrastive counterpart to 'wordhord onleac'.

Both phrases provide variations for a more typical verb of speech, that is, 'andswarode' or 'maþelode'; they function as a figurative periphrasis with the same structure (a verb with the prefix 'on' governs a compound noun, though the word

order is the reverse); both verbs roughly mean 'open': 'onlucan' literally means 'unlock', and 'onbindan', 'unbind'.[109] This use of 'on-*verb*' is quite common in the Old English poetic corpus. In *Andreas*, besides two instances of 'wordhord onleac' (316, 601), there are three other similar expressions: 'modhord onleac' (172), 'wordlocan onspeonn' [unfastened a word-lock] (470), hordlocan onspeon [unfastened hoard-lock](671). These are all employed to introduce direct discourse figuratively. Although not used to introduce direct speech, similar metaphorical expressions using this structure with 'on-*verb*' are also found in the corpus. In *Elene*, for example, Cynewulf writes in his epilogue that God 'bancofan onband, | breostlocan onwand, / leoðucræft onleac' [unshackled my body, laid open my heart – and unlocked the art of poetry] (1249–50). In *The Wanderer*, there is a line using 'bindan' with the same structure but in the opposite sense of 'onbindan': 'Ic to soþe wat / þæt biþ in eorle | indryhten þeaw / þæt he his ferðlocan | fæste binde' [I know, to be sure, that it is an excellent virtue in a man that he should bind fast his bosom] (11b–13).[110] Most of the instances with this construction are in fact used figuratively; *Concordance* records eleven instances of 'onleac', for example, and ten of them, used in the above way, are employed in a figurative sense; one has a simplex as an object: 'þa clamme onleac' [unlocked the clasps](*Riddle* 42: 12) – even in this instance the phrase 'þa clamme' is a metaphor for 'the clasps of mind'. The compounds in this formula for the introduction of speech invariably stand for 'mind' or 'words'. The analogy with those expressions suggests that 'beadurune' might refer to 'hateful or hostile mind or words'.

The expression 'onband beadurune' is normally considered to mean 'made a hostile speech'. The compound itself, however, has been variously translated: 'battle-

[109] Fulk, Bjork, and Niles note that 'the use of *onbindan* is paralleled' in lines 259 ('onleac') and 489 ('onsæl'). See Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, note on 501, p. 151.
[110] The qotation is from *The Exeter Book*, ed. by Krapp.

counsel' (Fulk, Bjork, and Niles), 'war-secret' (*BT*), 'battle-rune' (Mitchell and Robinson), or 'secret hostility' (George Jack).[111] The Old English word 'run' apparently causes difficulty in translating the compound. The meaning of the word is actually controversial. Brodeur speculates that the compound is 'traditional and ancient', stating that some compounds, such as 'beadurune', 'no doubt owed their existence to tabu or to magic, since in early Germanic times verse served an apprenticeship to incantation'.[112] On the other hand, C. E. Fell, writing about the word 'run' more generally, questions the validity of all five senses that *BT* provides (1. a whisper, 2. a mystery, 3. a secret, 4. of that which is written, with the idea of mystery or magic, 5. a rune, a letter), and argues that these senses are anachronistic and confused. She analyses Cynewulf's uses of the compounds with '-run' ('wælrune' [gruesome broodings] (28), 'leoðorune' [recitation of secrets] (522), and 'hygerune' [secret thoughts] (1098) in *Elene*; 'inwitrun' [spiteful counsel] (610) in *Juliana*), and states: 'Cynewulf's range for run in fact suggests that it was as neutral as "word"'. She claims: 'If one were to work through the Cynewulfian canon without preconceptions and try to find a word that would fit all contexts the nearest would be "thought" or "idea".' In support of her argument, she refers to the word 'runcofan' in *The Meters of Boethius* 22: 'he mæg siððan / on his run-cofan | rihtwisnesse / findan on ferhte' [then he can find what is right in his inner heart, his spirit] (58b–60a).[113] She does not mention the compound 'beadurune' in *Beowulf*, but her interpretation of '-run' seems relevant to *Beowulf* as well. If 'rune' is equivalent to

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111 *Beowulf: A Student Edition*, ed. by George Jack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

112 Brodeur, *Art*, p. 17.

113 Christine E. Fell, 'Runes and Semantics', in *Old English Runes and their Continental Background*, ed. by Alfred Bammesberger (Heidelberg: Winter, 1991), pp. 195–229 (pp. 195–216). See also R. I. Page, 'Anglo-Saxon Runes and Magic', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association,* 27 (1964), 14–31 (pp. 18–20). The quotation and translation are from*The Old English Boethius: With Verse Prologues and Epilogues Associated with King Alfred*, ed. and trans. by Malcolm R. Godden, and Susan Irvine (London: Harvard University Press, 2012).

'word' or 'thought/idea', this would surely make the compound more comparable with the 'wordhord' and the compounds for 'mind' also used as object of that verb or similar ones in other comparable periphrases for 'spoke'.

There is another point to consider in terms of 'beadurune' in relation to the other periphrases in the corpus: when those periphrases figuratively mean 'make a speech', the 'on-verbs' take concrete nouns as objects ('hord', 'loca', or 'cofa'). If this is the norm for these expressions, it is possible that '-rune' had a meaning of something more concrete than 'word', a meaning that can evoke visual images. Fell mentions Richard Morris, who examines the etymon of Northwest Germanic 'run' in a verb of cutting and argues that it 'was in the first place something carved, and by the time we meet it had developed the sense of "written message".' She does not seem convinced by his argument, stating: 'I have worked through the corpus trying out the sense "message" and this perhaps can be made to fit more easily. But not very easily.'[114] However, if Old English 'run' had had such a meaning as 'something carved', then 'beadurune' could have referred to inscriptions on concrete objects. Archaeological evidence tells us that some Anglo-Saxon artefacts carry runic inscriptions on them. Among them are blades or hilts of swords or spear-heads. The compound 'beadurune' might evoke such inscriptions on weapons, which are unseen until warriors use the weapons, intending to fight.[115] It is likely that the audience of the poem was familiar with such inscribed weapons. Later in the poem, there is a scene in which Hrothgar examines the giant-made sword with runic inscriptions (1687b–98a). Visualising 'beadurune' as an inscription would have encouraged the audience to compare the

[114] Fell, pp. 208–09.

[115] John Hines, 'Some observations on the Runic Inscriptions of Early Anglo-Saxon England', in *Old English Runes and their Continental Background*, ed. by Alfred Bammesberger (Heidelberg: Winter, 1991), pp. 61–83. He points out that the inscriptions on early Anglo-Saxon artefacts are inconspicuous (p. 73). See also Mitchell and Robinson, p. 191. Page also mentions a spear-head with a runic letter (p.29). I think this interestingly links the phrase 'wordes ord' to the compound 'beadurune'; both expressions carry the same image of a weapon with words.

hostile act of wielding a weapon in battle to Unferth's hostile speech to the hero.

Old English 'run' may have had nothing to do with actual weapons, of course, and as Fell analyses, it may simply have been synonymous with 'word', meaning 'unleashed a hostile word', but it is still to be noted that all the other nominal compounds with 'beadu-' in the poem occur to describe either weapons or actual battle.[116] The compound could thus have given the audience a vivid sense that 'words' can be wielded as weapons. It is also noteworthy that the poet again uses such a phrase in a context where it does not normally belong: the phrase 'onband beadurune' would be no less likely to be used in a situation where an armed warrior has landed on a foreign land and meets a coastguard than 'wordhord onleac' would be at a welcoming feast in a courtly hall. Both periphrases share this striking unexpectedness, which serves to intensify the well-intended act of the hero on one hand and the ill-natured one of Unferth on the other hand, enhancing a contrast in character between them. By treating 'onband beadurune' as a contrastive counterpart to 'wordhord onleac', we can also see that it achieves a reverse effect of 'wordhord onleac' on the addressee. The act of 'wordhord onleac' is advantageous to the Danish Coastguard, while that of 'onband beadurune' is disadvantageous to Beowulf; the Coastguard can be likened to someone who has unexpectedly been given treasure, whereas the hero to someone who has been attacked without warning.

'Gyd … wræc'

As mentioned above, the periphrasis 'gyd … wræc' is used to introduce Beowulf's short speech (2155–62), the second of the sequential speeches, in which Beowulf

116 They are: 'beadogrima' [battle-mask]; 'beadohrægl' [battle-garment]; 'beadoleoma'; 'beadomece' [battle-sword]; beadorinc [battle-warrior]; beadufolm [battle-hand]; beadulac [war-sport]; beaduscrud [battle-garment]; beaduserce [battle-sark].

reports his adventures in Denmard to his king Hygelac (2000–2151) and presents to him the treasures given by Hrothgar and his queen:

Het ða in beran eaforheafodsegn,
heaðosteapne helm, hare byrnan,
guðsweord geatolic, **gyd** æfter **wræc** (2152–54)

[So he commanded the boar to be carried in, the high standard, the helmet towering in battle, the grey mail-coat and the splendid war-sword; then he completed his story.]

It is possible that the poet chose the periphrasis simply to fulfil the metrical requirement, since the word 'gyd' alliterates with 'guðsweord geatolic' in the a-verse and this word in fact almost always alliterates in the corpus.[117] It is equally possible, however, that he coined the word 'guðsweord' to use the periphrasis, as the compound is a hapax legomenon.[118] I hope to show that this periphrasis not only fits perfectly with the occasion but also serves to mark the importance of the informaion in the speech which it introduces.

The poet uses the word 'gyd' or the variants 'gid' and 'gidd' ten times in the poem – there are also three related words: two compounds 'giomorgyd' [mournful song] (3150a) and 'wordgyd' [lay] (3172a), both of which are used for the scene of Beowulf's funeral, and one finite verb, a preterite of the denominal verb 'giddian', 'gyddode' (630), when Beowulf receives a cup from Wealhtheow and gives a pledge before his fight with Grendel. Half of the simplexes are used with the verb '-wrecan' [drive out (words), recite, utter], but only the one in line 2154 serves to introduce direct speech

[117] See *Concordance*.
[118] Many 'guð-' compounds in the poem are hapax legomena. See Orchard, *Companion*, pp. 70–71.

in the poem.

The Old English noun 'gyd' seems to have a variety of possible senses. *BT* provides several meanings for the term: 'song', 'lay', 'poem', 'speech', 'tale', 'sermon', 'proverb' and 'riddle'. The periphrasis in *Beowulf* is usually translated as 'utter a speech', since it introduces a speech. Unlike 'wordhord onleac', however, the periphrasis is not commonly used to introduce direct speech. Outside *Beowulf*, there is only one instance found in*Vainglory* (51) in the corpus.[119] Some critics have tried to narrow down the meaning of the word, but it does not seem easy to find why this term covers so many categories of speech. David R. Howlett claims the 'gyd' falls into three genres in *Beowulf*: (1) formal boasting speeches and exhortations, (2) solemn true, tragic stories of the conflicts of great heroes, and (3) elegies.[120] Karl Reichl, who examines the uses of the word in the corpus, questions Howlett's categorization, saying that the 'various occurrences of giedd and its compounds in *Beowulf* do not fall quite as unequivocally into' them. He himself attempts to assign a meaning to each instance of 'gyd' in *Beowulf*, according to the following four categories based on his analysis of the word: (1) 'poem, song', (2) 'narrative poem, heroic lay', (3) 'elegiac poem, dirge', and (4) 'wise saying, proverb'. He puts the word in line 2154 into the last category, but he seems uncertain of its sense.[121] According to Niles's explanations, '[*g*]*iedd* denotes first of all a song of any kind' and in extended sense 'any example of verse composition' (such as Cynewulf's poems) and 'speech, especially formal speech … in heroic poetry'. He claims: 'The word denotes no specific content … except to the

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[119] The speaker ('se witga' [a prophet] (50)) warns against arrogance. The use of the phrase is somehow comparable with that in Hrothgar's sermon (1723b).

[120] David R. Howlett, 'Form and Genre in *Beowulf*', *Studia Neophilologia*,46 (1974), 309–25 (p. 310).

[121] Karl Reichl, 'Old English *giedd*, Middle English *yedding* as Genre Terms', in *Words, Texts, and Manuscripts: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Culture Presented to Helmut Gneuss on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Michael Korhammer, Karl Reichl, and Hans Sauer (Cambridge: Brewer, 1992), pp. 349–70.

limited extent that eloquence or sententious speech implies wisdom.'[122] These explanations, however, are not particularly helpful when one considers why the periphrasis is employed here, in spite of the fact that *Beowulf* is full of formal speeches.

Most of the occurrences of the word 'gyd' in the poem are related to songs or performances by a scop (151, 868, 1065, 1160, 2105 and 2108), or dirges (1118 and 2446).[123] One instance occurs in Hrothgar's speech; it refers to the king's story about Heremod: 'ic þis **gid** be þe / awræc wintrum frod.' [For your sake I have told this tale, as one grown wise with the years.] (1723b–24a). It seems certain that the word in *Beowulf* is associated with utterances made in public places, notably on ceremonious or solemn occasions. The speech that the periphrasis 'gyd … wræc' introduces also takes place on a public occasion and in the speech Beowulf tells his lord about the history of the treasures he has obtained, which is likened to what is expected from a scop.

The sequential speeches by Beowulf are certainly comparable with a scop's performance. Morton W. Bloomfield and Charles W. Dunn lists a variety of roles of poets in early societies and one of them is a role as a historian who controls 'the official record of the past'.[124] Like a scop, Beowulf relates his adventures in Denmark and the history of the armour Hrothgar has given him:

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[122] John D. Niles, *Homo Narrans: The Poetic and Anthropology of Oral Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), pp. 16–19.
[123] The exact meanings of the word in lines 2105 and 2108 are not very ovbious, used by Beowulf's report on the feasts at Hrothgar's court. See Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, note on 2105 ff., pp. 233–34.
[124] Morton W. Bloomfield and Charles W. Dunn, *The Role of the Poet in Early Societies* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1989), p. 19. Stevens even states that 'with this speech, the longest in the poem, Beowulf becomes his own chronicler, and, in the process, he assumes the voice of the scop' (p. 235).

'Me ðis hildesceorp Hroðgar sealde,
snotra fengel; sume worde het
þæt ic his ærest ðe est gesægde:
cwæð þæt hyt hæfde Hiorogar cyning,
leod Scyldunga lange hwile;
no ðy ær suna sinum syllan wolde,
hwatum Heorowearde …' (2155–61a)

['Hrothgar, the discerning king, gave me this battle-gear and by his special word he urged me that I should first explain to you the loving-kindness of the gift: he said that king Heorogar, prince of the Scyldings, owned it for a long while, but that none the less he did not want to give it, that breast armour, to Heorogar's son the brave Heoroweard …']

Though this speech is short, its importance is apparent: what Beowulf presents to his king is special heirlooms from the Danish dynasty, whose origin Beowulf has been transmitted to by Hrothgar.[125]

Arms and armour had a significant role in Anglo-Saxon society, as is manifest in the poem.[126] The *Beowulf* poet himself often describes swords in detail, for example: Hrunting, Unferth's sword (1457–60a), the giant-made hilt Beowulf has brought from Grendel's lair (1677–98a), and Wiglaf's sword that he inherited from his father, Weohstan (2610b–25a). In the episode of Ingeld, it is a sword that the Old warrior

[125] On the use of 'sume' in 2156b, Calvin B. Kendall points out: 'When it is not the indefinite, *sum* must mean something like "great", "notable", "special" and be fully stressed': *The Metrical Grammar of 'Beowulf'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 72–73. See also Matti Rissanen, '"Sum" in Old English Poetry', in *Modes of Interpretation in Old English Literature: Essays in Honour of Stanley B. Greenfield*, ed. by Phyllis Rugg Brown, Georgia Ronan Crampton, and Fred C. Robinson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), pp. 197–225.

[126] See, for example, Mitchell and Robinson, pp. 191–92; Taylor Culbert, 'The Narrative Functions of Beowulf's Swords', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 59 (1960), 13–20 (p. 15).

makes use of to incite a young warrior to violence (2032–69a). It is noteworthy that Waldere mentions the history of his coat of mail in his formal speech before combat, for which 'gyddode', the denominal verb of 'gid', is used:

> Waldere mað[.]lode, wiga ellenrof,
> hæfde him on handa hildefrofre,
> guðbilla gripe, **gyddode** wordum:
> 'Hwæt, ðu huru wendest, wine Burgenda,
> þæt me Hagenan hand hilde gefremede
> and getwæmde [..]ðewigges; feta, gyf ðu dyrre,
> æt ðus heaðuwerigan hare byrnan.
> Standeð me her on eaxelum Ælfheres laf
> god and geapneb golde geweorðod
> ealles unscende æðelinges reaf
> to habbanne …' (*Waldere II* 11–21a)[127]

> [Waldere spoke out, a warrior strong in courage – he held in his hands the comforter in battle, in the brandishing of warblades – and uttered these words: 'Listen, lord of the Burgundians; you thought no doubt that the hand of Hagena would have done battle upon me and eliminated me from the standing fight. Fetch, if you dare from one so wearied in combat, this grey coat of mail. Here on my shoulders lies Alfhere's legacy, good and broad-fronted, enhanced with gold – a prince's garment not utterly ignominious to have …']

This may only be coincidental of course, but it must have mattered to warriors to know the origin of the arms and armour they wear and carry.

[127] Mitchell and Robinson, p.210.

The uses of the word 'gyd' in *Beowulf* suggest that it is associated with some knowledge to be made public. The periphrasis 'gyd … wræc' may thus connote more than 'utter a speech', that is, 'convey something important or something to be remembered or transmitted from generation to generation'. As is seen above, the passage in which the periphrasis is used is different from the other passages which introduce the last part of the sequential speeches in that it has an apparent *inquit*. It seems that the *Beowulf* poet chose to use the periphrasis here to announce that the following speech has important information, such information as a scop would give as an official record, rather than to leave out an *inquit* as he does in the other sequential speeches.

In conclusion, the four periphrases which are used to introduce direct speech in *Beowulf* are perfectly suited for each occasion on which the speaker gives his speech. The periphrasis 'wordhord onleac' (259b) shows Beowulf's open-minded way of replying to the Coastguard, giving the hero an air of authority as a leader; the expression 'wordes ord / breosthord þurhbræc' (2791b–92a) acutely conveys how Beowulf is struggling to speak; the periphrasis 'onband beadurune' (501a), which was most likely coined by the poet as a contrastive counterpart to 'wordhord onleac', serves to bring out the contrast between Beowulf and Unferth in character and manner. It does not seem coincidental that the periphrasis 'gyd … wræc' (2154b) is used when Beowulf gives important information about the treasures that he is about to present to his king; it may be used in the specific sense, 'convey important knowledge to be remembered from generation to generation'.

Conclusion

The examination of the sixteen *inquits* in *Beowulf* presents some noticeable features. Firstly, it seems certain that the poet handled them with great care. As is seen above, he not only employs the same set of *inquits* but also places them in the same metrical position for the first two dialogues. Apart from his treatment of the *inquits*, however, the speech-introductory passages for the dialogues are not repetitive but made suited for the situations. It is most likely that this was done for some narrative effect, as some critics have noted. Orchard, for example, sees the first ten speeches in the poem as 'carefully choreographed in an elaborate pattern which establishes the Danish court as a sophisticated and mannered milieu'.[128] If the poet chose the *inquits* for the first set of dialogues carefully, then it seems equally possible that the repeated use of the *inquit* 'maþelode' was also purposeful. I think that the formula itself can be the poet's own device, perhaps to draw special attention to the speeches which 'maþelode' introduces. Another notable feature is that the *inquits* in *Beowulf* are used in specific senses; the poet seems to distinguish between common verbs of speech in meaning. Likewise, it can be said that the periphrases were made suitable not only to each situation but also to the character and manner of a speaker. These features strongly suggest that the poet paid much attention to the way of presenting direct speech, selecting *inquits* carefully so that they represent direct speech in the most appropriate manner.

[128] Orchard, *Companion*, p.208.

Chapter 2

The demarcation of direct speech in *Beowulf*

Introduction

In this chapter, I shall examine the way the *Beowulf* poet demarcates direct speech from the narrative, mainly focusing on linguistic features of the beginnings and ends of the speeches as well as those of the onset of the narrative after direct speech. Metrical features are also considered in connection with the demarcation of direct speech. Four other Old English poems are used for comparison: *Genesis A and B*, *Andreas*, *Elene*, and *Juliana*. These have been chosen because they are comparable in length and because, like *Beowulf*, they contain a good number of speeches.

The linguistic features of the onset of direct speech

According to Moore, there were various lexical markers 'to signify the onset of a passage of reported speech' which were available to pre-modern poets or authors,[1] who had no conventional punctuation system and thus no way of indicating direct speech by punctuation marks.[2] Moore divides such markers into four categories:

1. Speech internal 'perspective shifters' (see below).

2. Speech external linguistic structures, e.g. simple *inquit* formulae.

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[1] Moore, p. 43.

[2] Punctuation marks which indicate direct speech were first found in printed books made in the 1570s, but it was not until the beginning of the eighteenth century that 'a new punctuation symbol which we may properly call "quotation marks"' came into general use. See M. B. Parkes, *Pause and Effect: An Introduction to the History of Punctuation in the West* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1992), p. 59. For punctuation marks used in the *Beowulf* manuscript, see Daniel Donoghue, 'A Point Well Taken: Manuscript Punctuation and Old English Poems', in *Inside Old English*, ed. by John Walmsley (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 38–58, (pp. 45–57).

3. Conventional social interaction routines, e.g. entrance and exit gambits or politeness formulae.

4. Conventional narrative interaction structures, e.g. formulae for public address.

She further subdivides category 1, 'Speech internal "perspective shifters"', into: 1) interjections, 2) vocatives, 3) deictic pronouns, 4) spatio-temporal deictics, 5) tense switches, and 6) other pragmatic markers, i.e. 'yes' or 'no' to mark the beginning of a response.[3] All the speeches in *Beowulf* have 'speech external linguistic structures' (category 2), since they are all introduced by *inquit* formulae. In fact, the passages introducing direct speech in this and all other Old English poems always contain the 'speech external linguistic structures', as Louviot points out: 'The Old English initial inquit is remarkable in that it is never dispensed with, which is quite unusual.'[4] Although Moore categorizes the *inquit* formula as only one of the strategies to mark direct speech, *inquits* in Old English poetry, or any other literary work devoid of punctuation, are actually indispensable to mark direct speech. The 'internal perspective shifters' do not operate to indicate direct speech. Without the support of *inquit* formulae, whether the latter consists of explicit verbs of speech, such as 'say' or 'answer', or less obvious verbs also used in *Beowulf,* such as 'greet' or 'order', the 'internal perspective shifters' alone do not function at all to indicate direct speech. It might be said that the shifts of perspective are in fact the reason why the *inquit* formulae are needed, as without the *inquit* formulae the perspective shifts would confuse the audience. The 'internal perspective shifters' should be considered not as preparing for the transition between the narrative voice and direct speech but as signs that we have arrived at direct speech. Nevertheless, the features she lists as

[3] Moore, p. 44. She gives a table listing primary methods of pre-modern speech marking.

[4] Louviot, *Direct Speech*, p. 44. There is an exception, however; *Guthlac B* has speeches that do not have *inquits*: see lines 1173b and 1175b.

the sub-categories of 'internal perspective shifters' are useful in an examination of the linguistic features of the onset of direct speech in *Beowulf*, since these features of direct speech occur everywhere. I will demonstrate that deictic pronouns (subcategory 3) and verbal switching of tense and mood (subcategory 5 – though Moore does not include the mood of verbs) are used especially at the onset of direct speech in *Beowulf*, and then consider how typical that use of them is among the other four Old English poems.

It appears that the *Beowulf* poet went into direct speech with great care and deliberateness. The length of each introduction to direct speech in *Beowulf* varies, and some speeches, typically introduced by the *inquit* 'maþelode', do not start immediately after the *inquit*. Compare the two speech-introductory passages below:

1. Wulfgar maþelode; **þæt wæs Wendla leod;**
wæs his modsefa **manegum gecyðed,**
wig ond wisdom: 'Ic þæs wine Deniga …' (348–50)

[Wulfgar spoke out: he was a prince of the Wendels and his courageous temperament, martial prowess and wisdom were familiar to many: 'I (will consult) the friend of the Danes … in this matter …'][5]

2. Hroðgar maþelode, **helm Scyldinga**:
'Ic hine cuðe cnihtwesende ...' (371–72)

[Hrothgar, protecting lord of the Scyldings, spoke forth: 'I knew him when he was a boy …']

[5] I add in parentheses translations which do not appear in cited lines for the sake of intelligibility.

In passage 1, four half-lines (boldfaced) intervene between the *inquit* 'maþelode' and direct speech, while only one half-line (boldfaced) does in passage 2. The number of the intervening half-lines in the poem ranges from nought (236b, etc.) to nine (501b–05b). The *inquit* unmistakably tells us direct speech will follow soon, but we still need some cue, equivalent to a modern inverted comma, that we have arrived at direct speech. The *Beowulf* poet uses deictic pronouns and tense/mood switching consistently at the onset of the speeches. The table below shows the number of the above-mentioned 'perspective shifters' used in the first two half-lines of the onset of the forty-five speeches in the poem. Additional comments are made underneath.

Speech internal markers in *Beowulf*	number
1. Interjections	4
2. Vocatives	13
3. Deictic pronouns	33
4. Spatio-temporal deictic adverbs	8
5. Tense/mood switching	28
6. Others or none	0

1. Interjections used are 'Hwæt' [what or lo] (530 and 1652) and 'la' [indeed] (1700 and 2864). The word 'la' is found in the identical half-line, 'þæt, la, mæg secgan' [Indeed one may say], and is used nowhere else in the poem.[6] Outside the two uses of 'hwæt' at the beginnings of speeches, the other three instances (942b, 1774a, and 2248a) are also used within direct speech, except one at the opening of the poem (1a).

2. Components of vocatives are addressees' names, such as 'Hroðgar' (407),

[6] See Risto Hiltunen, '"Eala, geferan and gode wyrhtan": On Interjections in Old English', in *Inside Old English*, pp. 91–116. He cites Offerberg's comment that '*la* must have been idiomatic and belonged to the spoken language' (p. 102).

patronymics, such as 'se mæra maga Healfdenes' [Healfdene's famous son] (1474), the combination with proper and common nouns, such as 'wine min Beowulf' [my friend, Beowulf] (457), and in one exceptional case (see below) a common noun which refers to a thing, that is, 'hruse' [earth] (2247).[7] It is notable that seven vocatives (407, 1169, 1216, 1384, 1474, 2247, and 2663) are used with imperatives, for example, 'Bruc ðisses beages, | Beowulf leofa' [Enjoy in good fortune, Beowulf, beloved…] (1216). It is also noteworthy that the so-called Last Survivor starts his speech by addressing an inanimate object, 'earth', using the imperative: 'Heald þu nu, hruse…' (2247). He begins speaking out in the same manner as other characters do when addressing fellow men, which highlights his desolation all the more: in the absence of human interlocutors he has nobody but 'Earth' to address.

3. Deictic pronouns are the most common of the 'perspective shifters' which appear at the onset of the speeches. In some cases, more than one deictic pronoun is used in the first two half-lines, for example, 'No ic me an herewæsmun' [Not at all I myself in martial vigour] (677), so the number of deictic pronouns used amounts to forty-four: the first-person personal or possessive pronouns are used twenty-five times, the second-person fourteen times, and demonstrative pronouns five times.[8]

4. There is one occurrence of the spatial deictic adverb 'her' [here] (361) and there are seven of the temporal deictic adverb 'nu' [now] (1474, 1818, 2247a, 2247b, 2729, 2900, and 3114). Most of the other instances of these words are used within

[7] The other vocatives are: 'wine min Unferð' (530), 'freodrihten min' (1169), 'Beowulf leofa' (1216), 'snotor guma' (1384), 'sunu Healfdenes' (1652), 'leofa Biowulf' (1987 and 2663), 'dryhten Higelac' (2000), and 'min wine' (2047).

[8] The first-person pronouns are: 'ic' (350b, 372a, 407b, 632a, 632b, 655a, 677a, 2426a, 2511b, 2518b, 2633a, 2729a, and 2794a); 'me' (316a, 677a, and 2155a); 'min' (457b, 530b, 1169b, and 2047a); 'we' (260a, 342b, 958a, 1652a, 1818a, and 2633b); 'usses', the genitive singular of the possessive pronoun 'ure' (2813b). The second-person pronouns are: 'þu' (407a, 457a, 506a, 530a, 1322a, 2047a, 2247a, and 2813a); 'þe' (1652a and 1841a); 'ge' (237a and 333a); 'eow' (391a and 1987a). The demonstrative pronoun 'ðes' is: 'ðis'(2155a); 'ðisse' (928a); 'þissum' (1169a); 'ðisses' (1216a); 'þas' (1652a).

direct speech: only one instance of 'her' (1061) is used in the narrative (see below), and only four instances out of forty-four of 'nu' are found in the narrative – it is worth noting that all the four instances are in the formula, 'nu gen/gyt + a verb of present tense' (1058, 1134, 2859, and 3167), as in line 1058: 'swa he nu git deð' [as he [the Lord] still does now].

5. Tense/mood switching of verbs is employed the second most frequently: the present tense is used twenty times and the imperative mood eight times.

The speech 'internal perspective shifters' used in *Beowulf* are all within these five categories, and there is no onset to any speech which does not have at least one of these 'shifters'.

While some lines contain only one 'shifter', others have more than one. Deictic personal pronouns tend to appear alone, as in the passage already cited:

Hroðgar maþelode, helm Scyldinga:
'**Ic** hine cuðe cnihtwesende ...' (371–72)

There are fifteen cases in which deictic pronouns alone are used at the onset of direct speech. Among them are eight cases where a single 'ic' is found. On the other hand, there are only two instances (287b and 3077) in which a single present-tense verb alone is found. Both speeches begin with gnomic utterances, using the modal verb 'sceal[l]', the third-person singular present tense of 'sculan':[9]

Weard maþelode ðær on wicge sæt,

[9] The modal verb 'sceal' is typically used for Old English gnomic utterances. See Louviot, *Direct Speech*, pp. 108–09.

ombeht unforht: ‘Æghwæþres **sceal**

scearp scyldwiga gescad witan,

worda ond worca, se þe wel þenceð …’ (286–89)

[The sentinel, a man fearless in fulfilling his duty, spoke from where he sat on horseback: ‘The shrewd warrior who reflects sufficiently must know the difference between words and actions ...’]

Wiglaf maðelode, Wihstanes sunu:

‘Oft **sceall** eorl monig anes willan

wræc adreogan ...’ (3076–78a)

[Wiglaf, Weohstan’s son, spoke up: ‘Often many a man has to endure misery through one man’s will …’]

Tense/mood switching, especially to imperative, tends to be used in conjunction with the other ‘shifters’, as seen in the passage below:

Beowulf maðelode; on him byrne scan,

searonet seowed smiþes orþancum:

‘**Wæs þu**, **Hroðgar**, hal! **Ic eom** Higelaces …’ (405–07)

[Beowulf spoke out – on him the mail-coat shone, an intricate mesh linked together by the ingenious arts of the smith: ‘Hail to you, Hrothgar! I am (a kinsman and thane) of Hygelac …’]

After the *inquit* formula followed by three parenthetical half-lines of a description of Beowulf’s armour, direct speech starts with a long line containing the imperative and present-tense verbs (‘Wæs’ and ‘eom’ respectively), the first- and second-person

pronouns (‘þu’ and ‘Ic’) and the vocative (‘Hroðgar’). Twenty-seven speeches start with more than one ‘shifter’, and twenty-three of them are a combination of present-tense or imperative verbs and other ‘shifters’, as in line 407 above. The combination of an imperative mood and a vocative makes for a very effective and recognizable start of direct speech. Vocatives and interjections are apparently more associated with the spoken language, but like spatio-temporal deictic adverbs, they are used neither alone nor frequently at the onset of the speeches.

These features of the onset of direct speech in *Beowulf* are also found in the other Old English poems. The table below shows the percentage in each poem of the first two half-lines of direct speech that contain these ‘shifters’ in the five Old English poems. The figure in parenthesis next to the percentage shows the order of frequency of the six categories within each poem.

Speech internal Shifters	*Beowulf*	*Genesis A and B*[10]	*Andreas*	*Elene*	*Juliana*	Average
1. Interjections	5.1% (5)	1.3% (5)	2.3% (5)	5.4% (4)	3.0% (5)	3.5% (5)
2. Vocatives	16.5% (3)	11.7% (3)	16.0% (3)	8.1% (3)	13.6% (3)	13.0% (3)
3. Deictic pronouns	41.8% (1)	42.2% (1)	38.9% (1)	44.6% (1)	39.4% (1)	41.5% (1)
4. Spatio-temporal deictic adverbs	8.9% (4)	6.5% (4)	8.4% (4)	4.1% (5)	6.1% (4)	6.8% (4)
5. Tense/mood switching	27.8% (2)	38.3% (2)	34.4% (2)	35.1% (2)	37.9% (2)	34.7% (2)
6. Others or none	0% (6)	0% (6)	0.8% (6)	2.7% (6)	0% (6)	0.7% (6)

Interestingly, not only is the order of frequency of the six categories within each poem (indicated in parentheses) almost the same – though *Elene* has more interjections than spatio-temporal deictic adverbs – but also the percentage of each category within each poem's total number of speech openings is not significantly different. 'Deictic pronouns' (category 3) appear the most frequently at the onset of direct speech in all those poems, comprising around forty per cent of the total number of the 'perspective shifters'. Tense/mood switching (category 5) follows, comprising around thirty-five per cent, though the percentage in *Beowulf* (27.8%) is slightly

[10] Bradley translates lines 1010 to 1012a in *Genesis A*: 'hwæt befealdest þu | folmum þinum / wraðum on wælbedd | wærfæsne rinc, / broðor þinne' as 'Behold; you with your incensed hands have buried in his mortal resting-place a man steadfast in faith, your brother'. G. P. Krapp, the editor of *The Junius Manuscript*, takes 'Hwæt' in line 1010 as an interjection, but other editors take it as an interrogative. The syntax ('hwæt' followed by the verb 'befealdest' preceding the subject 'þu') indicates it is interrogative. Bradley's translation 'have buried' suggests that he interprets the verb 'befealdest' as the second-person singular present tense of 'befealdan' [to fold or cover], but Doane notes that it is the second-person singular preterite form of 'befyllan' [to fell or strike down], which seems contextually more plausible; he translates 1010a as 'Why did you strike down…?' I follow his interpretation here, so do not count 'hwæt' as an interjection and take the verb as the preterite. See Doane, *Genesis A*, p. 247 and Krapp, *The Junius Manuscript*, p. 173.

lower. These figures suggest that using pronouns and verbs in the first line of direct speech might have been common practice in Anglo-Saxon poetry. Mitchell points out that personal pronouns for subjects and objects remain unexpressed more often in poetry than in prose.[11] Consistent use of personal pronouns at the beginning of direct speech, therefore, may also indicate that Anglo-Saxon poets consciously employed them to change gear.

As we have seen, most of those 'internal perspective shifters' are naturally restricted to occurrence within the speeches, but some of them are also used (though rarely) in the narrative voice: first-person pronouns, the interjection 'hwæt', the spatial adverb 'her', the temporal adverb 'nu', the demonstrative adjective 'þes' and the present tense of verbs. This fact certainly makes the persistent use of *inquits* understandable: without them, the shift from narrative to direct speech would not be self-evident. Before moving to the demarcation of the ends of speeches, it may be instructive to see where these words (i.e. 'ic' 'min' and 'we', 'hwæt', 'her', 'nu', 'þes' and the present tense of verbs) are used in the narrative voice. As we shall see, they mostly appear in traditional phrases for the 'authenticating' voice, to use Stanley B. Greenfield's term.[12]

Let us begin with first-person pronouns. The *Beowulf* poet uses the pronoun 'ic' to refer to himself (or the narrating voice). There are twelve instances of 'ic', five instances of 'mine' (the instrumental singular neuter form of the possessive pronoun 'min' [my]), and one instance of the plural 'we' used in the narrative,[13] though these are proportionately small numbers, given that there are 181 occurrences of 'ic', 61

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[11] Bruce Mitchell, *Old English Syntax*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), vol. 2, p. 993.

[12] Stanley B. Greenfield, 'The Authenticating Voice in *Beowulf*', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 5 (1976), 51–62, p. 53. He shows five ways in which the poet's own voice in the narrative 'responds to the narrative events and characters it presents'.

[13] The first-pronouns in the narrative voice: 'ic' in lines 38, 62, 74, 1011, 1027, 1196, 1197, 2163, 2172, 2694, 2752 and 2773; 'mine' in lines 776, 837, 1955, 2685 and 2837; 'we' in line 1.

occurrences of 'min' with variously inflected forms, and 24 of 'we' in the poem.[14] Outside direct speech, the pronouns 'ic' and 'we' always appear with words meaning 'heard', that is, the past-tense forms of 'hyran' or 'gefrignan'.[15] Some examples are:

Hwæt, we Gar-Dena in geardagum,
þeodcyninga þrym gefrunon (1–2)

[Listen! We have heard report of the majesty of the people's kings of the spear-wielding Danes in days of old …]

Ða ic wide gefrægn weorc gebannan (74)

[I have heard that this labour (of embellishing a place of the people) was proclaimed far and wide …]

Ne gefrægen ic þa mægþe maran weorode (1011)

[I have not heard that that people in a greater throng …]

Hyrde ic þæt he ðone healsbeah Hygde gesealde (2172)

[I have heard that the torque … he bestowed upon Hygd …]

The first-person plural pronoun 'we' occurs in the narrative voice only in line 1. Afterwards, the poet uses the singular 'ic'. This shift from 'we' to 'ic' also occurs in some other Old English poems, such as *Exodus* or *Andreas*.[16] Niles points out that

[14] These numbers are from the glossary of Klaeber's *Beowulf*. The number of 'ic' given in *A Concordance to 'Beowulf'* is one fewer: *A Concordance to 'Beowulf'*, ed. by J. B. Bessinger, program. by Philip H. Smith (New York: Cornell University Press, 1969).
[15] The word 'gefrægn' in line 2694a is supplied by the editors. See Ward Parks, 'The Traditional Narrator in *Beowulf* and Homer', in *De Gustibus: Essays for Alain Renoir,* ed. by John Miles Foley, J. Chris Womack, and Whitney A. Womack, Albert Bates Lord Studies in Oral Tradition, 11 (New York: Garland, 1992), pp. 456–79 (pp. 461–63).
[16] Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, note on 1–3, p. 110.

the poet switches from the plural 'we' to the singular 'I' after 'the story becomes more specific'.[17] Ward Parks, noting the same switching in *Odyssey*, sees it as 'interesting attestations to both the communality and individuality of the poet's activity'.[18] This opening 'we' may well be a conventional practice to start a tale. 'Mine' is used only in the phrase 'mine gefræge' in the narrative, literally meaning 'by my information', or more idiomatically 'as I have heard say'.

Some scholars have examined this 'I heard' formula in Old English poetry as a literary device and have suggested that these phrases are self-consciously traditional. Greenfield observes that these phrases allow the poet to treat his narrative as history, stating: 'This repeated and varied use of the "I have heard" formula suggests something of an antiquarian atmosphere'.[19] Parks, who also examines the 'I heard' formula very closely, notes that 'mine gefræge' formulae occur without discernible contextual pattern, and says: 'It suggests that the concept of poetry as something told, remembered and told again belonged to the very root Anglo-Saxon understanding of what narrative acts were.'[20] It seems certain that these first-person pronouns were conventionally used to narrate a story, and therefore it is likely that the Anglo-Saxon audience took them as idiomatic expressions rather than fully functional personal pronouns. In other words, these first-person pronouns in the narrative are a 'poetic I', not an 'empirical I', in Leo Spitzer's terms.[21] It is likely that the audience easily distinguished this poetic 'I' in the narrative voice from the empirical 'I' in direct speech.

As well as the plural 'we', the interjection 'hwæt' in line 1 (see the passage above)

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[17] John D. Niles, '*Beowulf': The Poem and Its Tradition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 198.
[18] Parks, 'The Traditional Narrator in *Beowulf* and Homer', p. 473.
[19] Greenfield, 'Authenticating Voice', p. 53.
[20] Ward Parks, 'The Traditional Narrator and the "I Heard" Formula in Old English Poetry', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 16 (1987), 45–66 (p. 61).
[21] Leo Spitzer, 'Note on the Poetic and the Empirical "I" in Medieval Authors', *Traditio* 4 (1946), 414–22.

appears only that once in the narrative. The use of this interjection at the beginning of a poem is conventional, too. 'Hwæt' opens several other Old English poems; some instances are found combined with the 'we/I heard' formula as in *Beowulf*.[22]

Other expressions, that is, the spatial adverb 'her', the temporal adverb 'nu', the demonstrative adjective 'þes', and the present tense of verbs, are also used by the 'authenticating' voice, as in the passage below, which contains the only instance of 'her' in the narrative in *Beowulf*:

> fela sceal gebidan
> leofes ond laþes se þe longe her
> on ðyssum windagum worolde bruceð. (1060b–62)
> [Much of pleasure and of pain a man must live through, who for any length of time partakes of this worldly existence here in these days of strife.]

Here the 'authenticating' voice, Greenfield argues, contemporizes the past 'at the level of simple human behaviour through many gnomic statements'. The present tense of 'sculan' in the narrative is also often used to 'commen[t] on the morality involved in the actions of the characters'.[23] Thus nine out of the ten instances of the present tense of 'sculan' in the narrative are used by the 'authenticating' voice.[24]

In addition to 'ðyssum' in line 1062 (see above), the other six instances of the demonstrative 'þes' in the narrative voice are used with referents meaning 'life' and 'world': 'þysses lifes' (197b, 790b, and 806b), 'þisne middangeard' (75b), 'þas lænan

[22] See Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, note on 1–3, p. 110.
[23] Greenfield, 'Authenticating Voice', pp. 57–59.
[24] The ten instances are lines 20, 24, 183, 1004, 1060, 1534, 2166, 2275, 2590, and 3176. 'Sceall' in line 2275b is apparently excluded as it refers to the natural behaviour of dragons: 'He gesecean **sceall** / hord on hrusan' [He is impelled to seek out the hoard in the earth] (2275b–76a). Dragons were believed to be real, inhabiting the natural world. See Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, note on 2272 ff., p. 240.

gesceaft' [this ephemeral creation] (1622b), and 'þas worold' (1681b). The phrases 'this/these' or 'here' used at the onset of direct speech all refer to a specific nearby object(s) or place ('here', i.e. the Danish coast (361), 'this sight' (928), 'this cup' (1169), 'this torque' (1216), 'these spoils' (1652), or 'this battle-gear' (2155)). There is a clear difference between the demonstratives at the onset of direct speech and those in the narrative voice in *Beowulf*. All the objects that the characters in the poem refer to using the demonstrative 'þes' are in their immediate vicinity and thus their referents could be pointed at, while those in the narrative voice cannot.[25] In other words, the demonstratives at the onset of direct speech are all endophoric; they refer to the objects which have already been mentioned and exist in the world of the narrative. The demonstratives used in the narrative voice, on the other hand, refer broadly to the world of time and place that we all inhabit, and are thus exophoric, referring to things familiar from outside the text rather than from within it. It is not difficult to characterise the demonstratives in the narrative voice: they have the broadest possible reference ('this world' or 'these days'), and are markedly different from those at the beginning of direct speech, which refer to objects near the speakers. The distinction is not unrelated to that between the first-person pronoun as used by the narrator and the pronoun used by speakers in the narrative. The exophoric demonstrative can be associated with the 'poetic I', which is 'a representative of mankind', as Spitzer puts it, in that the demonstratives in the narrative do not refer to any specific place or time that has a narrative presence, while the endophoric pronouns are aligned with the 'empirical I', in that they refer to specific objects in the narrative.[26]

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[25] See Stephen C. Levinson, 'Deixis', in *The Handbook of Pragmatics*, ed. by Laurence R. Horn and Gregory Ward (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), pp. 97–121 (pp. 102–09). The demonstratives at the onset of direct speech in *Beowulf* are 'gestural' to use his terminology.

[26] Spitzer, p. 416.

As mentioned above, all the four instances of 'nu' in the narrative voice are in the formula, 'nu gen/gyt + a verb of present tense'. Greenfield points out that these expressions ('her', 'nu', 'þes', and the present tense of verbs) are used to contemporize the events and characters that the poet narrates, 'suggesting a continuity between the past and the present'.[27]

As we have seen, the 'internal perspective shifters' which are found in the narrative voice in *Beowulf* are not only small in number but also mostly limited to conventional uses. There is thus a clear distinction in the use of those 'internal perspective shifters' between the narrating 'I', whose voice is authenticating, and the characters' voices. Nevertheless, as Niles says of the narrator's voice in *Beowulf*, 'the narrator is a significant presence in *Beowulf*, even though he entirely avoids calling attention to himself except to claim the authority of oral tradition for details of his song',[28] and the authenticating voice, navigating us throughout the poem, is ubiquitous. I think that this might be related to the tendency for Anglo-Saxon poets to use such sentence elements as pronouns or verbs at the onset of direct speech more often than adverbs or interjections: *inquit* formulae prepare the audience for the changes consequent on shift to internal speaker in function, and the changes from the third person pronouns to the first person, from the preterite tense to the present, or the indicative mood to imperative, require different pronouns or verb forms. Since the authenticating voice in the narrative shares the same words or expressions with the characters' voices in direct speech, such words as change forms according to speakers (i.e. pronouns and verbs) could serve better to separate characters' voices from the narrator's than such words as have fixed forms, no matter who uses them (i.e. adverbs or interjections).

[27] Greenfield, 'Authenticating Voice', p. 53.
[28] Niles, *Beowulf*, p. 203–04.

The resumption of the narrative after speech

In *Beowulf*, as Klaeber states: 'The prominent and rather independent position of the speeches is signalized by the fact that, in contrast with the usual practice of enjambment, nearly all the speeches begin and end with the full line.'[29] While there are some speeches which begin after the caesura (287b, 342b, 350b, 2511b, 2518b, and 3114b), no speech ends at the caesura – lines 389b and 390a are normally assumed to be missing – and the narrative voice after direct speech thus always starts with a new long line. This feature is in fact widely observable in Old English poetry. Louviot points out that Old English poetry tends to 'have the beginning and end of a speech coincide with the beginning and end of a line of poetry'.[30] Among the five Old English poems I have examined, no speech in *Andreas* ends at the caesura, though *Genesis A and B, Elene* and *Juliana* do have a few speeches ending in the a-verse.[31] Louviot also notes that 'the end of a speech is marked much more lightly' compared with the beginning, which is explicitly introduced by an *inquit* formula in Old English poetry.[32] The linguistic features that she points to in the resumption of the narrative after direct speech can be itemized as follows:

1. Use of the temporal deictic adverb 'þa'.
2. *Inquit* formula for the next speech.
3. Explicit reference to the speech that has just been made.
4. No specific marking.

Though sharing these general features, each of the five poems shows its own individual characteristics. For example, *Elene* and *Juliana*, which are both ascribed

[29] Klaeber, p. lv.
[30] Louviot, *Direct Speech*, p.56.
[31] *Genesis A and B* have twelve speeches ending at the a-verse (441, 762, 840, 895, 1008, 1043, 1790, 2484, 2526, 2641, 2666, and 2791), *Elene* has five (85, 584, 682, 753, and 952), and *Juliana* ten (282, 315, 350, 417, 460, 530, 553, 563, 627, and 669).
[32] Elise Louviot, 'Transitions', p. 388.

to Cynewulf, present an interesting difference: among the five poems, *Elene* has the lowest percentage of the use of the adverb 'þa' in the first half-line after direct speech, whereas *Juliana* has the highest.[33] When the initial words of the resumption of the narrative voice are examined, *Beowulf* notably has more finite verbs than the other four poems.[34] That is, verbs are especially used by the *Beowulf* poet at the resumption of the narrative voice.

According to Louviot, 'þa' signals the resumption of the narrative voice in more than 60 per cent of cases in the eight Old English poems she examined. She explains that the adverb serves as 'a marker of disconnection and contrast with a pre-established reference point'.[35] It is apparent that the *Beowulf* poet also makes use of the adverb 'þa'. It appears twenty-one times in forty-four first half-lines of the narrative after direct speech in *Beowulf*. Three *inquit* formulae (340, 2516, and 3110) contain the adverb. There are two notable patterns to mark the onset of the narrative after direct speech using the adverb 'þa': initial 'þa' (7 times) – typically followed by the copular verb 'wæs', such as 'Þa wæs on salum' [Then was in happiness] (607a) or 'Ða wæs gylden hilt' [Then was the golden hilt] (1677a) – and non-initial 'þa' (11 times) – typically following a preterite verb of movement, such as 'Hwearf þa hrædlice' [Briskly, then, he went off] (356a) or 'Eode þa to setle' [Then she went to her seat] (1232a). These patterns are commonly used in the other Old English poems. In *Genesis A and B* and *Juliana*, there is the reverse pattern, 'þa' followed by a verb

[33] The use of 'þa' in the first half line after direct speech: *Beowulf* uses it 21 times out of 44 half-lines (47.7 %); *Genesis A and B*, 51 out of 72 (70.8%); *Andreas*, 46 out of 64 (71.9%); *Elene*, 18 out of 39 (46.2%); *Juliana*, 23 out of 31 (74.2%). Bjork says of *Juliana*: 'largely because of what some once considered its plain and uninteresting style, this poem […] has been regarded as Cynewulf's first or his last work, the product of immaturity or of decline': *Cynewulf*, p. xiv.

[34] The use of a finite verb in the initial position of the half-line after direct speech: *Beowulf* 16 times out of 44 half-lines (36.4 %); *Genesis A and B*, 12 out of 72 (16.7%); *Andreas*, 9 out of 64 (14.0%); *Elene*, 8 out of 39 (20.5%); *Juliana*, 3 out of 31 (6.5%).

[35] Louviot, 'Transitions', p. 388. The eight poems are *Andreas, Beowulf, Christ and Satan, Elene, Genesis A and B, Guthlac A*, and *Juliana.*

of action, for example, 'þa onette' [then hasted] (*Genesis A* 2535), but this pattern does not occur in *Beowulf*, though it is found in other contexts elsewhere in the poem, for example, 'Ð/Þa c[w]om' (710a, 1162b, 1600a, 1644a, and 1802b). What is more notable in *Beowulf*, however, is that it lacks another pattern frequently used in the other poems: a pronoun followed by the adverb 'þa'. Again, it is found elsewhere in the poem, for example, 'Him ða Scyld gewat' (26a). This pattern is used only once after direct speech in line 340: 'Him þa ellenrof | andswarode'. This is also the only instance with a pronoun in the initial position restarting the narrative. This *inquit* formula introducing an answer is used very often in the rest of the corpus (see below).

When a speech follows another speech either in response or in a sequence of speeches by the same speaker, an *inquit* formula is used. It is notable that in ten instances out of fourteen the 'maþelode' formula is used (286, 348, 371, 456, 529, 957, 1383, 1840, 1999, and 2510).[36] *Elene*, which uses the adverb 'þa' even more sparingly than *Beowulf*, is again comparable with the epic in the use of this formula when a speech follows another speech in response (*Elene* 404, 627, 642, 655, and 685). The other three poems normally use the 'answer' formula: typical lines are 'him þa adam eft | andswarode' (*Genesis A* 882) and 'Him þa Andreas | agef ondsware' (*Andreas* 285).[37] In *Beowulf*, when a speech introduced by the *inquit* 'maþelode' is followed by a speech which responds to it, the same 'maþelode' formula is always used for the response (371, 456, 529, 957, 1383, and 1840):

Hroðgar maþelode, helm Scyldinga:
'Ne frin þu æfter sælum! …
Ic þe þa fæhðe feo leanige,

[36] The other four are: 'o/andswarode (258 and 340)'; 'Gegrette (2516)'; 'Het (3110a).
[37] Louviot lists the lines using those formulae introducing an answer in *Genesis*, *Andreas*, *Elene*, and *Juliana*: *Direct Speech*, p. 49.

ealdgestreonum, swa ic ær dyde,

wund*nan* golde, gyf þu on weg cymest.'

Beowulf maþelode, bearn Ecgþeowes:

'Ne sorga, snotor guma …' (1321–86a)

[Hrothgar spoke, protector of the Scyldings: 'Do not ask after matters of weal … I shall reward you for this act of vengeance with wealth, with antique treasures, and with coiled gold, as I did before, if you get away.' Beowulf, son of Ecgtheow, spoke: 'Do not, as a man of reason, give yourself up to grief …']

It seems that the poet wished to pair these speeches by using the same 'maþelode' formula.

In seven cases, the narrative resumes with an explicit reference to the speech that has just been made. The phrase 'Æfter þæm wordum' is used twice (1492a and 2669a) in a comparable way. One instance occurs before Beowulf plunges into the water to fight against Grendel's mother:

'… ic me mid Hruntinge

dom gewyrce, oþðe mec deað nimeð.'

Æfter þæm wordum Weder-Geata leod

efste mid elne, nalas andsware

bidan wolde … (1490b–94a)

['… With Hrunting I shall achieve renown, or else death will carry me off.' After these words the prince of the Weder-Geats pressed on with courage and would not even wait for a reply ...]

The other comes before Wiglaf joins Beowulf to assist him:

'… scealt nu dædum rof,
æðeling anhydig, ealle mægene
feorh ealgian; ic ðe fullæstu.'
Æfter ðam wordum wyrm yrre cwom,
atol inwitgæst oðre siðe … (2666b–70)

['… Now, resolute prince, renowned for your deeds, you must defend your life with all your strength. I shall support you.' After these words the reptile, hideous malevolent being came angrily on a second time…]

Louviot states that the meaning of the formula 'æfter þæm wordum' in Old English poetry sometimes 'goes beyond that of a mere transition and might be better translated as "in conformity with those words" or even "because of those words" rather than "after those words"'.[38] She considers that the first instance in the above-cited passage is one of such examples where the preposition 'æfter' is not merely temporal, because, in diving into the mere immediately after his pledge, Beowulf 'shows that his deeds conform to his words'.[39] There also seems to be a parallel between the situations in which the phrase is used: immediately after their words, both young men physically commit themselves to a dangerous undertaking. Moreover, before the second passage above, Wiglaf encourages Beowulf, reminding him of his vow by saying that 'ðu ne alæte | be ðe lifigendum / dom gedreosan' [while you lived you would not let your reputation fail] (2665–66b), which shows some connection with young Beowulf's pledging before the fight against Grendel's mother

[38] Louviot, 'Transitions', p. 391.
[39] Louviot, 'Transitions', p. 391. See also Fulk, Bjork, and Niles; the glossary says the temporal preposition 'æfter' 'sometimes verg[es] on the sense *in consequence of*, *on account of*' (p. 345).

‘dom gewyrce, / oþðe mec deað nimeð’ [(I) shall achieve renown, or else death will carry me off] (1491). Both instances reveal how achieving ‘dom’ or ‘glory’ matters to the hero.

There are two instances where ‘word’ is used to refer to the previous speech in a seemingly untraditional way: one of them unusually refers to the addressee’s (Wealhtheow’s) reception of the speech: ‘Đam wife þa word | wel licodon, /gilpcwide Geates’ [These words, the Geat’s pledging-speech, pleased the lady well.] (639–40a). The other is to tell the death of Beowulf: ‘Þæt wæs þam gomelan | gingæste word / breostgehygdum’ [This was the last word of the old man’s heart] (2817–18a). In the other four poems, there is no instance of this use of the demonstratives, ‘þæt’ or ‘þam’, to restart the narrative after direct speech. I think it is possible that the *Beowulf* poet made use of the aural similarity of the demonstratives to the adverb ‘þa’ to mark the resumption of the narrative.

The adverb ‘swa’ is used three times (2057, 2267, and 3028) to characterize speeches which have just been made. One instance appears after the speech of the old Heathobard; the reporter Beowulf says: ‘Manað swa ond myndgað | mæla gehwylce / sarum wordum …’ [Thus he keeps hinting and reminding upon every occasion with painful words …] (2057–58a). Another is after the Last Survivor’s speech; the narrator says: ‘Swa giomormod | giohðo mænde / an æfter eallum …’ [So, mournful of mood, he gave voice to his pain, the one left behind by them all ...] (2267–68a), and the remaining one occurs after the Messenger’s speech: ‘Swa se secg hwata | secggende wæs, / laðra spella …’ [In such a manner, the brave man talked of the unwelcome tidings …] (3028–29a). In the other poems, the adverb ‘swa’ in reference to the previous speech is also infrequent, and the other poets do not use the adverb to characterize the speech, as does the *Beowulf* poet. ‘Swa’ is used three times in *Andreas* (‘Swa hleoðrode | halig cempa’ [So spoke the saintly warrior] (461); ‘Swa

hleoðrodon | hæleða ræswan' [Thus spoke the people's leaders] (692); 'Swa se dædfruma | dryhten herede' [Thus this campaigner praised the Lord] (1455)), once in *Genesis B* ('swa hire eaforan sculon | æfter lybban' [So must her children live in their turn]: 623), and none in *Elene* and *Juliana*.[40]

There are five instances lacking any specific marking and not belonging to any of the above patterns. Two of them start with a preterite verb not followed by the adverb 'þa': 'Hyrde ic þæt þam frætwum' [I have heard that (there followed closely) upon those precious adornments] (2163a)[41] and 'Dyde him of healse' [Took from his neck] (2809a). Another two unusually start with a common noun followed by the copular verb 'wæs': 'Stræt wæs stanfah' [The road, paved with stone, gleaned] (320a) and 'Geat wæs glædmod' [The Geat was cheerful of mood] (1785a). The remaining one is 'Huru se snotra / sunu Wihstanes' [Sure enough, the prudent son of Weohstan] (3120). This seems an atypical way to resume the narrative after direct speech: there is no instance of the use of the emphatic adverb 'huru' in this position in the other Old English poems.

As mentioned above, the *Beowulf* poet resumes the narrative after direct speech with the preterite tense of a verb quite frequently: there are sixteen half-lines with a preterite verb in initial position, whereas there are seven with the adverb 'þa' in the same position. This feature becomes conspicuous when the percentage of the use of the finite appearing at the resumption of the narrative in the epic poem is compared with those of the other four Old English poems (see above footnote 34). I consider that this contributes to clear demarcation of direct speech from the narrative voice in *Beowulf*. Most of the last clauses of the speeches before the

[40] In *Elene*, 'swa' in line 350 refers to the following speech, not the previous one.
[41] On 'the highly ritualized exchange of gifts' in lines 2152 to 2199, Orchard points out that it is 'carefully marked off by chiastic repetition of introductory phrases' ('Het ða in beran …' in line 2152a, 'Hyrde ic …' in lines 2163a and 2172a, and 'Het ða … in ferian' in line 2190): *Companion*, p.226.

resumed narrative use the present tense. The change from the present tense of a verb to the preterite acts as a mode-shift signal. I would like to show how this mode-shift works in *Beowulf*.

In *Beowulf*, thirty-three speeches use the present tense in the last clauses of direct speech, ten speeches use the preterite, and one uses the imperative. There are thirty-four speeches which have a verb in the final position of direct speech – nineteen present-tense verbs, ten preterite verbs and five infinitives complementary to a present-tense auxiliary.[42] One example of a finite verb occupying the final position of the b-verse is:

> '… Site nu to symle ond onsæl meoto,
> sigehreð secgum, swa þin sefa **hwette**.'
> Þa wæs Geatmæcgum geador ætsomne
> on beorsele benc gerymed … (489–92)
>
> ['… Now, sit down to the feast and unfold to the men what you are deliberating, a glorious victory, as your spirit prompts you.' So a bench was cleared in the beer-hall for the Geatish soldiers grouped together …]

Hrothgar's welcoming speech ends with the present subjunctive singular verb 'hwette'. Because the preterite tense is normally used to tell the narrative, if the last clause of a speech finishes with the present tense, it certainly serves to mark it off from the resumed narrative that immediately follows. There are ten speeches which have the preterite tense in the last clauses, all of which occupy the end:

[42] Nineteen present-tense finite verbs at the ends of the speeches are in lines 258, 300, 347, 355, 455, 490, 606, 661, 687, 979, 1231, 1382, 1491, 1784, 1839, 2515, 2668, 2808, and 2816; ten preterite finite verbs are in lines 339, 370, 956, 1187, 1676, 1998, 2056, 2751, 3027, and 3119; five infinitives are in lines 319, 528, 638, 2509, and 3109.

'… Wen' ic þæt ge for wlenco, nalles for wræcsiðum,
ac for higeþrymmum, Hroðgar **sohton**.'
Him þa ellenrof andswarode
wlanc Wedera leod … (338–41a)

['… I would guess that you have come seeking Hrothgar out of a proper pride – not because of misfortunes of exile, but out of majestic qualities of courage.' The proud leader of the Weder-Geats, renowned for his valour, answered ...]

Even in those cases, however, the boundaries are not particularly obscure. Four of the ten speeches are followed by *inquit* formulae, as above, with the next speaker mentioned in the a-verse (lines 340, 371, 957, and 1999); and two of them start the following line with the conventional temporal marker 'þa'. Although there are two cases where the narrative is resumed with a finite verb with the same tense, the number of the adjacent verbs is different. Wealhtheow concludes her speech when she brings a cup to her husband and their nephew:

'… gif he þæt eal gemon,
hwæt wit to willan ond to worðmyndum
umborwesendum ær arna **gefremedon**.'
Hwearf þa bi bence þær hyre byre wæron… (1185b–88)

['… if he remembers all that we two have previously done for him by way of honour, for his pleasure and for his dignity, during his childhood.' She turned then to the bench where her children … were …]

Her speech ends with the preterite plural 'gefremedon' and the narrative resumes

with the singular verb of movement 'Hwearf'. The other instance is in the last part of the Old Heathobard speech reported by Beowulf:

> '"… ond þone maðþum byreð,
> þone þe ðu mid rihte rædan **sceoldest**."
> Manað swa ond myndgað mæla gehwylce
> sarum wordum …' (2055b–58a)

['"… and wears that treasure which by right you should possess." Thus he keeps hinting and reminding upon every occasion with painful words …']

The embedded speech ends with the second-person past tense of 'sculan', and Beowulf, the reporter, restarts his story with the third person. In Old English, verb endings do not always tell us the difference of persons. In these two cases, however, the differences of the inflected forms of the verbs are obvious. Furthermore, the following adverbs 'þa' or 'swa' reinforce the implications of the change.

In the remaining two instances, where the speech ends with the third-person singular preterite tense, the poet does not use verbs at the onset but resumes the narrative by mentioning the speaker again. In line 3028a, the poet mentions the anonymous messenger once again: 'Swa se secg hwata'. The resumption of the narrative after the last speech in the poem (3114b–19) is 'Huru se snotra / sunu Wihstanes' (3120). There is no finite verb in the first two half-lines of the resumption of the narrative here. Since the speech ends with the preterite tense, the use of a verb with the same tense and person might confuse the audience. Instead, the poet seems to have marked the onset of the narrative by re-using the same patronymic of the speaker which is employed to introduce the speech and which thus acts to frame the speech: Wiglaf maðelode, | Wihstanes sunu' (3076). This indicates again that the

poet was very careful about treating the tense/mood of verbs not only at the onset of the speech but also at the resumption of the narrative after it.

In addition to the use of tense, it may be worth pointing out two other notable features that accompany the resumption of the narrative. Firstly, as mentioned above, there are two half-lines which start with a common noun followed by the copula 'was' (lines 320 and 1785). Here the poet seems to mark the onset of the narrative not only by tense-shifting but also by turning our attention to something nearby. One instance occurs at the end of the Coastguard's farewell speech, after he has led the Geats to the point where they can see the hall Heorot:

'… Ic to sæ wille,
wið wrað werod wearde healdan.'
Stræt wæs stanfah, stig wisode
gumum ætgædere. (318b–21a)

['… I will go back to the sea, to keep guard against any hostile band.' The road, paved with stone, gleaned; the route guided the men grouped together]

At the second feast in Heorot held after Beowulf has defeated Grendel's mother, Hrothgar ends his long speech by promising him a generous reward for it:

'Ga nu to setle, symbelwynne dreoh
wiggeweorþad; unc sceal worn fela
maþma gemænra siþðan morgen bið.'
Geat wæs glædmod, geong sona to,
setles neosan, swa se snottra heht. (1782–86)

['Now, go to your seat and enjoy the pleasures of the banquet as one honoured

for his prowess. A very great quantity of treasures is to change hands between us when morning comes.' The Geat was cheerful of mood. He went forthwith to seek his seat as the wise man had bidden.]

In both instances, the poet changes gear by describing a nearby thing or person: the splendid street leading to Heorot (320) and the addressee Beowulf (1785). There is no instance of this pattern in the other poems except one in *Genesis A*, which is comparable, though the verb is not 'was'. When Abraham is about to strike his own son, Isaac, to offer him to God, as he was ordered, God stops him. This is the last part of God's speech:

"… þe wile gasta weard
lissum gyldan þæt þe wæs leofra his
sibb and hyldo þonne þin sylfes bearn."
Ad stod onæled. (2920b–23a)

['… The Lord of the Holy Spirit will reward you with joys because his peace and favour was dearer to you than your own son.' Sacrificial fire stood lit.]

Here the narrative is resumed suddenly by describing the fire in which Abraham is about to burn Isaac. A difference between those instances, however, is in the use of verbs in direct speech: in both instances in *Beowulf*, the verbs, which are not preterite, are at the very end of direct speech: the infinitive 'healdan' and the present 'bið'.

The other unusual feature is restarting the narrative at line 2163 with the 'I heard' formula.[43]

[43] See above footnote 41.

'… Bruc ealles well!'
Hyrde ic þæt þam frætwum feower mearas
lungre, gelice last weardode,
æppelfealuwe … (2162b–65a)

['… Use all this well.' I have heard that there followed closely upon those precious adornments four horses, all alike in being swift and tawny-dappled …]

Another instance of the use of the 'I heard' formula after direct speech is again found in *Genesis A*: 'Þa ic on lothe gefrægn / hæðne heremægcgas | handum gripan…' [Then I have heard that the heathen men in a hostile host gripped Lot with their hands …] (2484b–85). This also seems to support the notion that the Anglo-Saxon audience distinguished this poetic 'I' in the narrative from the empirical 'I' in direct speech.

Louviot concludes from her survey of direct speech in Old English poems that the speech itself is a basic structural unit, which 'is marked in the same way as is a narrative unit'.[44] Within the tradition of Old English poetry, however, the *Beowulf* poet's treatment of verbs at the resumption of the narrative is remarkable: the use of different tense, mood, or number provides an alternative to the adverb 'þa' in differentiating direct speech from the narrative voice.

The metrical features of the onset of direct speech

As well as these lexical features, two metrical characteristics are observable with regard to the delimitation of direct speech. One is that almost all the half-lines at the onset of direct speech and at the resumption of the narrative start with

[44] Louviot, *Direct Speech*, p. 61.

unstressed syllables. They scan as Types A3 (xxSx), B (xSxS), or C (xSSx)[45] – 'x' and 'S' represent an unstressed syllable and a stressed syllable respectively – in the classification of Eduard Sievers. Some aspects of scansion are controversial, of course. As E. G. Stanley puts it: 'It is a feature of the work of Anglo-Saxon metrists that their various findings cannot be reconciled' (i.e., their scansion of *Beowulf* varies).[46] If finite verbs in the clause-initial position of the a-verse are assumed according to Calvin B. Kendall's system not to carry metrical stresses,[47] this preference for unstressed syllables would be even more marked. At the beginning of direct speech, only three half-lines start with stressed syllables:

ombeht unforht: 'Æghwæþres sceal …' (287b)

'Mæl is me to feran; fæder alwalda …' (316)

'Leofa Biowulf, læst eall tela …' (2663)

While lines 287b and 2663 obviously have initial stressed syllable with alliteration, line 316 is disputable. A. J. Bliss scans it as xxxxSx (Type A3).[48] Stanley also lists it among A3 half-lines.[49] Fulk, Bjork, and Niles consider this half-line to be 'an archaic idiom', suggesting that '*mæl* came to be regarded as adverbial in the idiom, roughly equivalent to *nū*, and accordingly destressed'.[50] Line 287b is the onset of the

[45] These patterns in parenthesis are only fundamental ones. The number of unstressed syllables may vary. See Jun Terasawa, *Old English Metre: An Introduction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), pp. 32–44.
[46] E. G. Stanley, 'Some Observations on the A3 Lines in *Beowulf*', in *Old English Studies in Honour of John C. Pope*, ed. by Robert B. Burlin and Edward B. Irving, Jr (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), pp. 139–64 (p. 139).
[47] Kendall, pp. 231–308. But it seems as if the finite verbs do carry stress and are therefore not type A3 in the following four cases: 'Onfoh þissum fulle, / freodrihten min …' (1169); 'Bruc ðisses beages, / Beowulf leofa …' (1216); 'Meaht ðu, min wine, / mece gecnawan …' (2047); 'Heald þu nu, hruse, / nu hæleð ne moston …' (2247).
[48] A. J. Bliss, *The Metre of Beowulf* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958), p. 123 and p. 137.
[49] Stanley, 'Some Observations', p. 155.
[50] Fulk, Bjork and Niles, note on 316, p. 137.

Coastguard's speech which is the last of the sequential speeches made between him and Beowulf. It may be regarded as different from the others in that it is not an isolated speech. Line 2663 is the only indisputable instance of starting direct speech with a stressed alliterative syllable in the a-verse. Furthermore, this half-line has another unique feature. There are thirteen instances in which vocatives are used at the onset of direct speech: six are in the a-verse and seven in the b-verse. No instances of the a-verse but this one has a vocative as the first element of the verse: compare, for example, line 407 ('Wæs þu, Hroðgar, hal!') or line 1384 ('Ne sorga, snotor guma'). Line 2663 is the onset of a speech by Wiglaf, when he has just come to help Beowulf, who is struggling against the dragon. I am inclined to think that unusual metre in this line gives the speech dramatic urgency.

The same pattern is observed at the resumption of the narrative. As we have seen, some speeches are immediately followed by the 'maþelode' formula, which always conforms to Type D (S(x)Ssx), 's' representing a half-stressed syllable. When those lines are excluded, only two half-lines start with stressed syllables at the beginning of the narrative after direct speech: 'Stræt wæs stanfah' (320a) and 'Geat wæs glædmod' (1785a). It is worth noting that these lines are unusual not only metrically but also lexically in that they start with a common noun, as we have seen.

Another notable feature is that almost all the full lines preceding direct speech show the opposite metrical feature, starting with stressed syllables with alliteration, and conforming to Types A1 (SxSx) or D (SSsx). A passage I have already cited above provides a relevant example:

Hroðgar maþelode, helm Scyldinga:
'Ic hine cuðe cnihtwesende...' (371–72)

Line 371a is Type D (SxSsx) and line 372a Type A3 (xxxSx). The contrast in metre between the two lines highlights the beginning of direct speech. There are only four exceptions: 'gehedde under heofenum' (505a) and 'sægde gesiðum' (2632) are Type A3; 'hwylce Sæ-Geata' (1986) and 'ac he soðlice' (2899) are Type C.[51]

These metrical features seem too consistent to be coincidental. But they may be unsurprising. It is often pointed out that Type A3 half-lines, especially those with more than two unstressed syllables before the stressed syllable, frequently start clauses or sentences.[52] The beginning of direct speech or the narrative after direct speech coincides with that of a sentence. Stanley states:

> We may suppose the Anglo-Saxons themselves to have been attuned to the metre of the *Beowulf* poet; and since in their poetic manuscripts they had virtually no syntactic punctuation to help them understand, I believe that, in this poem at least, they took a half-line with an initial cluster of unstressed syllables as likely to open a larger structure, in rising order of magnitude, a clause, a sentence, a speech, a (numbered) section.[53]

Even though Types B and C do not have as many unstressed syllables before their initial stressed syllables as Type A3 does, verses starting with a stressed syllable and those with an unstressed syllable(s) might have had different associations for the Anglo-Saxons. Ad Putter, who examines Chaucer's metre, points out that 'In an age when writers did not have our system of punctuation at their disposal (and could

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[51] Bliss scans line 2632 as A1 (SxxSx).
[52] Donoghue, pp. 38–58; Kendall, pp. 34–35; Stanley, 'Some Observations', p. 146 and 'Initial Clusters of Unstressed Syllable's in Half-lines of *Beowulf*', in *Words, Texts and Manuscripts: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Culture Presented to Helmut Gneuss on the Occasion of his Sixty-fifth Birthday*, ed. by Michael Korhammer (Cambridge: Brewer, 1992), pp. 263–84.
[53] Stanley, 'Initial Clusters', p. 270.

not trust any of the punctuation marks they *did* use to be accurately transmitted), metre may have had a clarifying function like that of modern punctuation.'[54] This observation may also apply to *Beowulf*: starting with a weak syllable or weak syllables might have served to delimit direct speech from the narrative.

Conclusion

In *Beowulf*, either deictic pronouns or present-tense/imperative verbs, or both, are used in the first two half-lines of every speech, and such elements as vocatives and interjections are used less frequently at the onset of direct speech. This feature is not peculiar to the epic but is observed in the other four Old English poems as well. It is interesting that these 'internal perspective shifters', as Moore calls them, at the beginning of direct speech are employed in strikingly similar proportion in all the poems. This similarity suggests that using pronouns and verbs in the first line of direct speech might have been common practice in starting direct speech in Old English poetry. As for the resumption of the narrative after direct speech, the linguistic features found in *Beowulf* are also observed in the other Old English poems. However, the switching of verb tense or mood between the last clause of direct speech and the first clause of the reopening of the narrative is a more frequent marker of the end of direct speech in *Beowulf*. Moreover, metrical features also seem to contribute to the demarcation: the onset of both direct speech and of the resumption of the narrative consistently begin with unstressed syllables. These features all point to the *Beowulf* poet's conscious efforts to make direct speech prominent. In Chapters 4 and 5, I would like to consider why direct speech in *Beowulf* is treated with this care.

[54] Ad Putter, 'In Appreciation of Metrical Abnormality: Headless Lines and Initial Inversion in Chaucer', forthcoming in *Critical Survey*.

Chapter 3

The disposition of direct speech in *Beowulf*[1]

Introduction

As we have seen, the *Beowulf* poet employs various lexical strategies to demarcate direct speech from the narrative voice, and these strategies are also observable in other Old English poems and in the English language more generally. In this chapter, I will broaden the focus to examine how the poet embeds direct speech in the poem. First, I will look at direct speech in relation to the metrical line and then examine how passages of direct speech are distributed throughout the poem. I shall compare and contrast the *Beowulf* poet's ways of disposing direct speech in the poem with those in other Old English poems and in the classical epics the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid*.

The metrical line in relation to direct speech in *Beowulf*

As mentioned in the previous chapter, almost all speeches in *Beowulf* start and end with long lines: only six out of forty-five passages of direct speech start at the caesura (lines 287b, 342b, 350b, 2511b, 2518b, and 3114b); just one passage ends at the caesura (line 389a). Apart from line 389a, after which some half-lines are normally considered to be missing (see below), these b-verses, as Anita F. Handelman points out, 'fall in the middle of either groups of alternating speeches or sequences of speeches by the same characters'.[2] In other words, no dialogue or sequence of speeches start at the caesura. This seems to suggest that the poet treats sequences of direct speech as a unit which starts and ends neatly with the full line. The one exception is the line ending at 389a. In

[1] I use the word 'disposition' herein to mean 'the way in which something is placed or arranged'.
[2] Anita F. Handelman, 'Wulfgar at the Door: *Beowulf*, 11. 389b–90a', *Neophilologus,* 172 (1988), 475–77, (note 8, p. 477).

the course of their discussions of this problematic line, both Handelman and Orchard have drawn attention to the poet's remarkable consistency in treating direct speech.[3] Building on their observations, I would like to discuss how the *Beowulf* poet shapes sequences of speeches into units.

Let us take a closer look at that single passage of direct speech terminating at the caesura after 389a. In the manuscript this line is immediately followed by the half-line (390b) that in most editions of the poem is printed as the b-verse of the next line.[4] Although there is no gap between them in the manuscript, these half-lines do not alliterate, and scholars have taken various approaches to this problem. Line 389a is the last part of a speech by Hrothgar, who tells Wulfgar, his herald, to give permission for the Geats to enter his hall:

> '… gesaga him eac wordum, þæt hie sint wilcuman
> Deniga leodum.' * * *
> [Wedera leodum] word inne abead:
> 'Eow het secgan sigedrihten min …' (388–91)
> ['… and also say to them in words that they are welcomed by the Danish people.'
> (so Wulfgar) announced words inside to the Geatish people. 'My victorious lord
> commanded me to tell you …'][5]

It has usually been assumed that at least two half-lines (389b and 390a) were missing here, since, in addition to lack of alliteration, the transition to the narrative sounds too abrupt. Some editors make attempts to restore the two half-lines.[6] In his third edition,

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[3] Handelman, pp. 475–77; Orchard, *Companion*, pp. 52–53.
[4] For the facsimiles of the manuscript, see *Electronic Beowulf*, ed. by Kevin S. Kiernan, program. by Ionut Emil Iacob, online 4th edn (London: 2016) <http://ebeowulf.uky.edu/ebeo4.0/CD/main.html>.
[5] The translation of the four lines is mine, since Bradley's departs from the text I quote. See footnote 87 in Chapter 1.
[6] For editorial treatments of the problem presented by lines 389a and 390b, see *Beowulf*

for example, Klaeber supplies: 'Þa to dura eode / widcuð hæleð' [Then to the door went the widely-known warrior] (389b and 390a). Because, apart from alliteration, the line 'Deniga leodum |word inne abead' is not deficient syntactically or semantically, other critics interpret the absence of alliteration here differently. Kevin Kiernan, for instance, maintains that lack of alliteration alone does not justify editors' 'conjectural restoration', claiming that the manuscript reading 'makes excellent sense'.[7] He considers the half-line 'word inne abead' with the subject unexpressed to be a transition from the end of Hrothgar's speech to Wulfgar's. More recently, Alfred Bammesberger, who also believes that no lines are omitted here, proposes that the end of Hrothgar's speech should be line 388b ('þæt hie sint wilcuman'), taking account of the fact that no other speeches end at the caesura in *Beowulf*, which Handelman has pointed out. He also suggests that the word 'Denigra' should be replaced by the word 'Wedera', which would restore alliteration.[8]

Handelman and Orchard, on the other hand, give more attention to the poet's careful treatment of direct speech, and believe that at least four half-lines might have been missing here. Handelman states: 'The problem with the passage is not simply a matter of alliteration, however. The manuscript reading, even with the question of alliteration set aside, is so much at odds with the poet's treatment of direct speech elsewhere in the poem that emendation still seems justified.' She points out that in *Beowulf*, 'both the identity of a speaker and the location from which he speaks are adequately accounted for' and 'direct speech invariably terminates with the full poetic line'.[9] She shows that all other instances where the identity of a speaker is not explicitly mentioned happen 'between two speeches by the same character' (2152–54, 2516–18a, 2661–62, and 2809–12). She therefore concludes: 'With alternating speakers the poet provides an

and Judith, ed. by Elliott van Kirk Dobby (London: Routledge, 1954), p. 136.

[7] Kevin S. Kiernan, '*Beowulf' and the 'Beowulf' Manuscript*, rev. edn (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1996), p. 187.

[8] Alfred Bammesberger, 'Hrothgar's Speech Welcoming Beowulf', *Notes and Queries*, 53 (2006), 269–72. Mitchell and Robinson suggest a similar solution: '[e]ither something is lost or *leodum* was miswritten for an alliterating word like *we(o)rode*' (footnote 390, p. 61).

[9] Handelman, p. 475.

identification; with understood pronouns the poet keeps the same speaker. By either measure, the unamended text is uncharacteristic of the *Beowulf*-poet's normal practice.' Reinforcing her point by further discussing these four cases of the *inquit* formulae where the speakers remain unexpressed, Orchard states that they 'do not offer really convincing parallels for accepting the half-line *word inne abead* (line 390b) as the sole link between Hrothgar's speech and Wulfgar's'.[10]

As Handelman notes, the poet never fails to mention the place where a speech is made. And here there is no doubt that Wulfgar is announcing the king's permission in front of the Geats, who are waiting outside at the entrance of the great hall. It is very odd that the poet does not mention where the herald is making the announcement. The adverb 'inne' could, of course, be taken as the indication of the venue of the speech: 'being still inside the hall', as Klaeber interprets it,[11] but the expression would be less than clear, since the adverb can also be interpreted as referring to the place where the king utters his words: 'a word with the king within' has been one suggested interpretation of 390b,[12] i.e., Wulfgar announced (to the Geats) the conversation that had taken place with the king inside. The poet usually mentions where a speech is made more clearly. The verse 'word inne abead' remains a problem; it is too elliptical to stand as an *inquit* in this poem.

A further objection to the theory that Hrothgar's speech ends in line 388 is that the half-line 'Wedera leodum' would be a very unusual way of resuming the narrative not only in *Beowulf* but in Old English poetry generally. The *Beowulf* poet's way of resuming the narrative after speech obeys certain rules. It is only when a speaker responds to the previous speech that the poet uses a one-line introduction to the following speech, which is invariably the 'maþelode' formula. Nor, in other Old English poems, when the next speaker addresses a different person or people in a different place, does a one-line *inquit*

[10] Orchard, *Companion*, p. 52.
[11] Klaeber, note on 390, p. 142.
[12] Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, note on 389b f., p. 140.

formula ever occur immediately after direct speech. Moreover, the *Beowulf* poet's way of demarcating the narrative from direct speech is never unclear. The first half line of the resumption of the narrative always indicates the return to the story by containing either the adverb 'þa' or a preterite finite verb (or both) where the passage after direct speech does not refer to the previous speech, speaker, or addressee (see the previous chapter).

Furthermore, there is a good explanation of how the omission of textual material may have arisen, as Johan Gerritsen has observed: eye-skip between 'Deniga' and 'leodum'. Below are the transcription of the manuscript from line 388 to 391 and the equivalent passage from the edited text:

> . . . gesaga him eac wordum þ*æt* hie
> sint wilcuman **deniga leodum** word in
> ne abead. eow het secgan sige drihten
> min . . .[13]

> '… gesaga him eac wordum, þæt hie sint wilcuman
> Deniga leodum.' * * *
> [Wedera leodum] word inne abead:
> 'Eow het secgan sigedrihten min …' (388–91)

Gerritsen points out that the level of the base of the word 'deniga' is slightly lower than that of 'leodum'. He considers therefore that the line 'was not written continuously', but the scribe's pen 'temporarily left the writing surface'. Assuming the a-verse of 390 began with the word 'Wedera', as the edited version does, he concludes: 'Since Deniga leodum and Wedera leodum would hardly have made two successive on-verses, there would then

[13] Johan Gerritsen, 'Emending *Beowulf* 2253—Some Matters of Principle', *Neophilologus*, 73 (1989), 448–53, pp. 450–51.

be reason to think that more is missing.'[14] Orchard, supporting his argument and also doubting that the word 'leodum' was used in 'two consecutive a-lines' states that 'the patterning of the other speeches would indicate that whatever has been lost, there had to have been enough space to terminate Hrothgar's speech with a b-line, identify Wulfgar as the speaker of the following speech, and describe his movement from Hrothgar to the Geats'.[15] It seems to me that their argument is convincing enough to believe that more than two-half lines were omitted here. Although it does not prove that the speech by Hrothgar did not end at the caesura, the assumption that some lines were missing here entails the possibility that the king's speech may originally have been ended with the full line, as do all the other speeches in *Beowulf*.

There are six passages of direct speech starting at the caesura: lines 287b, 342b, 350b, 2511b, 2518b, and 3114b. These passages appear 'in a highly restricted set of circumstances', as Orchard puts it. They are 'the second or third speech in a series or exchange spoken together'.[16] The speech starting with line 287b is the last of the three-speech dialogue between the Coastguard and Beowulf (see Chart 1 below), those starting with 342b and 350b are likewise the second and third parts of the three-speech dialogue between Wulfgar and Beowulf (Chart 2), those starting with 2511b and 2518b are the second and third of speeches by Beowulf to his men before his fight against the dragon (Chart 3), and that starting with 3114b is the second of the speeches delivered by Wiglaf to his companions outside the dragon's hoard (Chart 4).

[14] Gerritsen, pp. 450–51.
[15] Orchard, *Companion*, pp. 53–54.
[16] Orchard, *Companion*, p. 53.

Chart 1:

Beowulf's dialogue with the coastguard

…	meþelwordum **frægn**
speech (237–57)	
Him se yldesta	**ondswarode**,
werodes wisa,	wordhord onleac:
speech (260–85)	
Weard **maþelode**,	ðær on wicge sæt,
ombeht unforht:	
speech (287b–300)	

Chart 2:

Beowulf's dialogue with Wulfgar

…	æfter æþelum **frægn**
speech (333–39)	
Him þa ellenrof	**andswarode**,
wlanc Wedera leod,	word æfter spræc,
heard under helme:	
speech (342b–47)	
Wulfgar **maþelode**	(þæt wæs Wendla leod;
wæs his modsefa	manegum gecyðed,
wig ond wisdom):	
speech (350b–55)	

Chart 3: Beowulf's speech

Biowulf **maþelade**,	bearn Ecgðeowes:
speech (2426–2509)	
Beowulf **maðelode**,	beotwordum spræc
niehstan siðe:	
speech (2511b–15)	
Gegrette ða	gumena gehwylcne,
hwate helmberend,	hindeman siðe,
swæse gesiðas:	
speech (2518b–37)	

Chart 4: Wiglaf's speech

Wiglaf **maðelode**,	Wihstanes sunu:
speech (3077–3109)	
Het ða gebeodan	byre Wihstanes,
hæle hildedior,	hæleða monegum,
boldagendra,	þæt hie bælwudu
feorran feredon,	folcagende,
godum togenes:	
speech (3114b–19)	

In the first two dialogues of the hero with the Coastguard and Wulfgar respectively, the use of verbs of speech ('frægn', 'andswarode', and 'maþelode') reveals how well these

dialogues are paired, as some scholars have noted.[17] Orchard also points out that '[t]here is much careful repetition' in the contents of the two exchanges and says: 'Such repetition in the exchanges the Geats have with both the coastwarden and Wulfgar only highlights the poet's careful patterning'.[18] Moreover, it can be pointed out that all the speeches starting at the caesura share the same characteristics: they tend to be short (nine lines on average) introduced by relatively short transitional passages (two and half lines on average).[19] These features observable in the series of speeches seem to contribute to knitting each sequence together into a close unit, though this may become evident only after the poet's use of the metrical line in the other speeches is taken into account in this poem.

It is appropriate to mention the remaining sequential speeches in the poem which do not contain a speech starting at the caesura, since all the sequential speeches have a similar pattern in the use of *inquits*, even if this pattern is not as obvious as that in the two dialogues between the hero and the Danes. There are four sequential speeches by the same character(s) in *Beowulf*. In addition to those mentioned above (2426–2509 , 2511b–15, and 2518b–37; 3077–3109 and 3114b–19), there are another two sequences of speeches by Beowulf that are broken up into two parts but that contain no speech starting at the caesura: one sequence is created when Beowulf reports his adventure in Denmark to Hygelac, his king, and presents to him the gifts that Hrothgar has given (2000–2151 and 2155–62); and the other sequence is created after he defeats the dragon (2794–2808 and 2813–16).

There are thus four instances of broken-up speeches made by a single character (three by Beowulf and one by Wiglaf). All of them happen in Geatland in the latter part of the

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[17] See, for example, Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960) pp. 152–54; Orchard, *Companion*, p. 208; Bjork, 'Speech as Gift', pp. 1008–12; Shippey, 'Principles', pp. 119–22; Weldon, p.83–88.

[18] Orchard, *Companion*, pp. 208–09.

[19] The line lengths of these sequences of speeches are: 237–57 (21 lines), 260–85 (26), and 287b–300 (13.5); 333–39 (7), 342b–47 (5.5), and 350b–55 (5.5); 2426–2500 (84), 2511b–15 (4.5), and 2518b–37 (19.5); 3077–3109 (33) and 3114b–19 (5.5).

poem. Except for the first sequence, which is placed towards the end of Part 1, the rest of the sequential speeches occur in Part 2, describing Beowulf's last battle in his old age. These sequential speeches bear a similarity in the use of *inquits*. The last speeches within these sequences are introduced by uncommon *inquits*, that is, 'Het … gyd æfter wræc' (2152–54), 'Gegrette' (2516) and 'het' (2812b and 3110a) (see Chapter 1). All the other speeches in *Beowulf* have introductory passages containing at least one common verb of speech, such as 'maþelode' or 'cwæð', with the one exception of Beowulf's last sequence of speeches (2794–2808 and 2813–16), where a part of the introduction of the initial speech, presumably containing a verb of speech, is most likely to have been omitted (2792b).[20] This use of verbs of speech – a combination of common and uncommon *inquits* – for the sequential speeches may suggest that though they are broken up, the initial common verb of speech still governs, and echoes through, the whole series of speeches, serving to ensure the continuity of the whole series. It is worth noting that these sequential speeches are also similarly proportioned as far as length is concerned – in all cases, the initial speeches are much longer than the subsequent ones. This characteristic also indicates that the *Beowulf* poet gave thought to the sequencing of speeches and wished to present them as units.

The *Beowulf* poet's treatment of the metrical line in presenting direct speech seems peculiar to the poem. Other Old English poems also have some passages of direct speech which start or end at caesura, though most of them normally start and end with the full line, as in *Beowulf*. However, there is otherwise no discernable pattern in the presentation of direct speech in relation to the metrical line.

In *Andreas*, which has more passages of direct speech than *Beowulf*, only two out of sixty-eight speeches start at the caesura. The poem has no speech ending at the caesura,

[20] Most editors consider that line 2792b was omitted. Klaeber supplies 'Biorncyning spræc' [The warrior-king spoke] (pp. 105 and 221); Mitchell and Robinson suggest supplying 'Bregorof gespræc' [The powerful one spoke] (note on 2792b, p. 146). See also footnote 107 in Chapter 1.

nor does it have any broken-up speeches. The two speeches starting with the b-verse do not seem to present any features comparable to those in *Beowulf*. In fact, they do not seem comparable even to one another. One is made by Andreas when he comes to rescue Matthew, who has been put in prison by the Mermedonians (1023b). The opening part of the speech alone survives; the whole leaf is missing soon after Andreas begins to speak.

… sæde him guðgeðingu,
feohtan fara monna: "Nu is þis folc on luste,
hæleð hyder on
* * *
gewyrht eardes neosan."
Æfter þyssum wordum wuldres þegnas,
begen þa gebroðor, to gebede hyldon … (1022b–27)

[… he (Andreas) told him (Matthew) of the outcome of the aggression and of the striving of those criminal men: 'These people are now eager; men hither on …'
'… deed, to return home.' After these words the thanes of heaven, both of those brothers, bent down in prayer ...']

The poem resumes with the last part of a speech. These fragmentary speeches were probably the start and end of dialogue between Andreas and Matthew, to judge by the Anglo-Saxon analogue, 'The Legend of St Andrew', which depicts the same story.[21] The other speech is made by God when He appears to Andreas, who has also been thrown into prison (1467b). This is the shortest speech in the poem; it has only one and half lines: "Ne scealt ðu in henðum a leng / searohæbbendra | **sar** þrowian." ['No longer shall you suffer

[21] *The Anglo-Saxon Legends of St. Andrew and St. Veronica*, ed. and trans. by Charles Wycliffe Goodwin (Cambridge: Deighton, 1851), in HathiTrust Digital Library <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044081185571> [accessed 10 November 2017], pp. 12–13.

pain under the afflictions of armed warriors.'] (1467b–68). The situations of the two speeches are similar: the addressers have come to the rescue of their addressees who are in prison. However, the speech by God is isolated, whereas the speech by Andreas was most likely the initial speech of dialogue, though it might also have been short.[22] It is certain that, unlike the speeches starting at the caesura in *Beowulf*, neither speech is the second in a series of speeches.

In the Cynewulfian poems, *Elene* and *Juliana*, which Louviot says have more passages of direct speech starting and ending at the caesura than any other Old English poem, there is still no instance found comparable with the use of the alliterative line in relation to direct speech in *Beowulf*.[23] In *Elene*, there are eight passages beginning at the caesura and five ending at the caesura. There seems no discernible rule governing direct speech that starts or ends in the middle of the metrical lines. Speakers vary: Angel(s) (85a and 753a), Constantine (162b), Helena (406b, 584a, 605b, and 682a), Judas (419b, 683b, and 952a), messengers (551b), and a collection of people (588b and 892b). The occasions where those passages occur equally vary: they are sometimes isolated (79–85a, 162b–65, 551b–54, and 892b–93), sometimes used for dialogue (406b–10, 419b–535, 574–84a, 588b–97, 605b–08, 670–82a, 683b–84, and 939–52a), and, in one case, used for a speech within a speech (750–53a). The lengths of the passages again vary: the longest has 116.5 lines and the shortest has 1.5 lines. *Juliana*, which, unlike *Elene* or *Beowulf*, has more passages of direct speech ending at the caesura than beginning there,[24] presents a striking contrast in this respect with *Beowulf*, which may have had no passage of direct speech ending at the caesura. Moreover, the distribution of those speeches ending in the middle of the long line in *Juliana* is interestingly unbalanced. In the first

[22] It does not seem to have been as short as that by God. Andreas has just begun to tell Matthew about the aggressive Mermedonians before his speech breaks off. It seems unlikely that this speech was complete with only one further half-line. In the prose version, Matthew talks more than Andreas.
[23] Louviot, *Direct Speech*, p. 56.
[24] Three passages start at caesura (68b, 347b, and 430b), whereas ten end at caesura (282a, 315a, 350a, 417a, 460a, 530a, 553a, 563a, 627a, and 669a).

half of the poem, passages of direct speech, with only one exception (68b), start and end with the long line, and then in the latter half of the poem, when Juliana is put in dungeon and exchanges words with a devil, speeches starting or terminating at the caesura suddenly dominate, regardless of who is speaking: five speeches by Juliana (272–82a, 347b–50a, 456–60a, 559b–63a, and 641–69a) and six by the devil (289–315a, 352–417a, 430b–53, 461–530a, 539–53a, and 619–27a). No sequence of speeches by the same character is found in the Cynewulfian poems.

To sum up, it is probable that in *Beowulf* no passage of direct speech ended at caesura. The speech by Hrothgar ending at line 389a was probably caused by scribal omission and might originally have ended with a full line. There are six passages of direct speech starting at caesura. None of them is an isolated speech, for all occur within dialogues or sequences of speeches by the same characters. They are short and contextually subsequent to the preceding one(s), the first of which is the longer except for the dialogue between Beowulf and the Coastguard. These features observable in the use of these passages of direct speech suggests that the *Beowulf* poet treated them as a unit and carefully considered their arrangement. These features also seem peculiar to the poem. Other Old English poems, such as *Andreas*, *Elene* and *Juliana*, do not provide any comparable instances. These findings, though more thorough examinations of the matter in the corpus are certainly needed, imply that the way the *Beowulf* poet shapes sequences of speeches into units was a procedure not observable in the other (later) extant poems, and also that direct speech in *Beowulf* may play a role very different from those in the other Old English poems which I have examined and which have hagiographic themes. In the next section, I shall examine how direct speech in *Beowulf* is distributed in the poem.

The distribution of direct speech in the poem

Comprising 38.7 per cent of the poem, direct speech in *Beowulf* certainly takes up a

large part of the poem. Compared with classic epics, such as the *Odyssey* or the *Aeneid*, however, the proportion of direct speech in the Old English epic is not particularly high: direct speech makes up 68.0 per cent of the *Odyssey*, and 46.8 per cent of the *Aeneid*. One of the reasons for the smaller proportion of direct speech in *Beowulf* may be its distribution in the poem: direct speech occurs only in the intervals between the hero's three battle scenes, and the battle scenes are completely devoid of direct speech. Moreover, the poet seems to employ direct speech comparatively selectively. It is never used, for example, for collective utterances, as it is in other Old English poems, and it is never used for the scop's songs, just as it is not in the classical epics; for these, indirect speech is used exclusively. A further consideration of distinctions in the distribution of direct speech in *Beowulf* may give us a revealing insight into its function in the epic. In what follows, I shall examine first where direct speech is used, and then for whom it is used, or not used, in this poem.[25]

There are certain scenes where direct speech is never used in *Beowulf*. The fighting scenes are one instance, and the voyage scenes another. The following list shows where direct speech is used in chronological order – the fighting scenes are inserted in parentheses.

[25] See Introduction. Perelman has conducted a similar examination, but her approach is different from mine.

Venue:	**Speaker(s)**:
▪On the shore of Denmark	Beowulf, Coastguard
▪Outside and inside Heorot	Beowulf, Wulfgar, Hrothgar
▪At Heorot	Beowulf, Hrothgar, Unferth
(Fight with Grendel)	
▪At Heorot	Beowulf, Hrothgar, Wealhtheow
▪Near Grendel's lair	Beowulf
(Fight with Grendel's mother)	
▪At Heorot	Beowulf, Hrothgar
▪In Hygelac's hall	Hygelac, Beowulf
▪In the barrow	Last Survivor
▪Near the barrow, the dragon's hoard	Beowulf
(Fight with Dragon)	
▪Near the dragon's hoard	Wiglaf
(Fight with Dragon with Wiglaf joining Beowulf)	
▪Near the dragon's hoard	Beowulf, Wiglaf
▪In the enclosure on the cliff, near the hoard	Messenger
▪Near the hoard	Wiglaf

Except for the first venue where Beowulf exchanges words with the Coastguard, all the speeches take place in the royal halls or close to the enemies' lairs: Heorot, Hrothgar's hall, the lair of the Grendels, Hygelac's hall, and the dragon's hoard. Most speeches are made in scenes in which formal speeches are normally expected to be delivered, for example, on entering another nation or foreign hall, or at a feast in the hall. But no speeches are made on the battlefields where in other epic poems such as *The Battle of*

Maldon combatants often exchange words before fighting. In *Beowulf*, the hero utters pledging words to the people for whose sake he is about to fight, not to his enemies, before he undertakes battle; this is the reason some speeches are delivered near the enemies' lairs. The speech by the Last Survivor is most unusual: it is a speech made long before the immediate narrative time and is the only speech without audience in this poem, though his speech starts as if it were an address with the Earth personified: 'Heald þu nu, hruse …' (2247). Adrien Bonjour says that though this speech has 'no immediate connection whatsoever with the main story', it serves to 'prepare the central theme and dominant mood of the end of the poem'.[26] This speech also plays an important part in informing us about the origin of the treasures in the Dragon hoard, and I will discuss it in the next chapter.

As the above list shows, the poet does not use direct speech when the hero is fighting. He describes how Beowulf shouts at the dragon when he enters his hoard:

> Let ða of breostum, ða he gebolgen wæs,
> Weder-Geata leod word ut faran,
> stearcheort styrmde (2550–52a)
>
> [Then, because he was now swollen with fury, the prince of the Weder-Geats let loose a cry from out of his breast; truculent of heart he bellowed aloud.]

The word in line 2551b 'word' suggests that the hero says something intelligible, rather than lets out a mere roar.[27] But the poet does not use direct speech to express what Beowulf utters here. We may not normally expect dragons to communicate with people,[28]

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[26] Adrien Bonjour, *The Digressions in 'Beowulf'* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1950), pp. 68–69.
[27] Bjork suggests the possibility of this word being 'expletive', saying 'the word or words themselves remain a mystery': 'Speech as Gift in Beowulf', p. 1000.
[28] The dragon Fafnir in Old Norse sagas talks, but he is an atypical dragon that has been transformed from a man. See *The Saga of the Volsungs: The Norse Epic of Sigurd the Dragon Slayer*, trans. Jesse L. Byock (London: Penguin Books, 1999), pp. 57–59 and pp. 63–65.

but the hero does not speak during the fight even after Wiglaf has joined him.

The fact that Beowulf faces non-human opponents may be one factor in the absence of direct speech in the battle scenes. Warriors announce themselves to their enemy before starting to fight, as in *Hildebrandslied* (7–60) or in *The Fight at Finnsburg*: 'Sigeferþ is min nama,' cweþ he; | 'ic eom Secgena leod, / wrecce*a* wide cuð…' ['Sigeferth is my name' he declared. 'I am a prince of the Sicgan, an adventurer famed abroad…'] (24–25a).[29] Parks analyses this type of 'verbal dueling' in the battlefield in heroic narratives and notes the generic pattern which usually has two aspects: 'eris' – he uses the term to express 'contention for glory' – and 'contract'. The speech by the Viking messenger in *The Battle of Maldon* (29–41) will illustrate this pattern: the messenger contends that they are superior in battle to Byrhtnoth's army (eristic) and suggests that they should surrender, agreeing to the conditions the Vikings offer (contractual).[30] Parks says that 'the inter human fights occur in negotiative and formally contestational settings that give the violence a meaning intelligible to those who engage in it'. However, conflicts between humans and non-humans lack these elements and he declares that 'you cannot flyt with Grendel'.[31] The conflicts in *Beowulf* are certainly 'interspecific' (i.e., occurring between different species) and Beowulf's enemies are naturally not represented as speaking human language. The poet depicts Grendel and his mother as 'on weres wæstmum' [in forms of a man] (1352a) and 'idese onlicnæs' [likeness of woman] (1351a) respectively, but the force of these 'humanoid' descriptions is to imply that they are not human: the furthest the poet goes in representing the monsters as human is to give them thoughts and expectations and to compare their shapes to those of humans.[32] Similarly, the dragon

[29] Quotations from *The Fight at Finnsburg* are from *Klaeber's Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, ed. by Fulk, Bjork, and Niles.
[30] Ward Parks, *Verbal Dueling in Heroic Narrative: The Homeric and Old English Traditions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp.42–71.
[31] Parks, *Verbal Dueling*, p.22.
[32] The verb 'mynte', the third-person singular preterite form of 'myntan' [intend, think] is used exclusively for Grendel (712, 731, and 762), and 'wolde' [wished] is used for Grendel's Mother (1277, 1292, and 1546).

in *Beowulf* is more like an animal than an imaginative creature that can talk. It is true that the poet gives us his moods analogous to those human: 'wæs ða gebolgen | beorges hyrde, / wolde *se* laða | lige forgyldan / drincfæt dyre' [By then the keeper of the burial-mound was swollen with fury; the malignant creature intended to recompense the costly drinking-vessel with flame] (2304–06a).[33] Nevertheless, the dragon's behaviour is more similar to a predator that is instinctively searching for his prey: having perceived a man intruding into his hoard, he 'stonc ða æfter stane' [went smelling along the rock] (2288a), 'sohte / georne æfter grunde' [eagerly went searching along the ground] (2293b–94a), and 'hlæ*w* oft ymbehwearf / ealne utanweardne' [repeatedly roamed around the whole outside of the barrow] (2296b–97a). It would be a surprise at any rate for him to talk all the more because Grendel's mother, who, having her son killed, has the most human-like motive for fighting against Beowulf, has not talked.

Beowulf's enemies are thus not open to negotiation. No matter what kinds of enemies an epic hero faces, however, it would not be impossible to give him monologues on any occasion. In the *Odyssey*, for example, Odysseus often expresses his feelings in direct speech when he is alone: he laments out loud his misfortunes when he is in danger at sea (5. 299 ff) or when he has woken up in his own fatherland, not knowing where he is (13. 200 ff): 'ὤ μοι ἐγώ, τέων αὖτε βροτῶν ἐς γαῖαν ἱκάνω;' [Alas, to the land of what mortals have I now come?].[34] Likewise, in the *Aeneid*, when Aeolus, god of the winds, sends a storm to strike Aeneas' fleet of ships, the hero cries aloud how he would rather have died under the walls of Troy (1. 94–101). It appears that the *Beowulf* poet does not use speech for the expression of uncommunicated personal feeling but rather as an instrument or reflection of social relationships. This is one way in which the Old English epic diverges from the classical epics in the use of direct speech and it may contribute to the lower proportion of

[33] Orchard says that 'despite the clear antagonism between the worlds of monsters and men, there is […] something deeply human about the "monsters"': *Pride and Prodigies*, p.29.
[34] All quotations and translations from the *Odyssey* are from Homer, *Odyssey,* trans. by A. T. Murray, rev. by George E. Dimock, 2 vols, Loeb Classical Library 104 and 105 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919).

direct speech in the poem.

In other Old English poems, such as *Elene* and *Juliana*, direct speech itself constitutes the main part of the narrative. In *Elene*, the exchange between Elene and Judas is part of the climax of the poem; Elene accomplishes her purpose through questioning the Jew, forcing him to find the cross on which Christ was crucified. Their dialogue (598–690) is placed in the middle of the poem, occupying a significant part of the 1321-line poem. Judas then finds the cross through his long speech or prayer (725–801). He entreats God aloud to reveal to him where the cross was buried. After he has been given a sign, he gives thanks to God aloud (807–26). The central part of *Elene* thus consists of direct speech itself. Likewise, in *Juliana*, the exchange between Juliana and her opponents is unmistakably the most important part in this poem: her refusal to get married to a wealthy pagan (46–224) and to surrender to a devil's temptation (242b–563a). Especially in the latter part of the poem, direct speech plays an important part in emphasizing the strength of Juliana's faith; through dialogue, the saintly woman forces the devil to reveal the truth about Christ. In both *Elene* and *Juliana*, direct speech is the means of conveying the main stories. In this respect, the role of direct speech in these hagiographic poems is very different from that in *Beowulf*, where the important battle scenes have no direct speech.

As has already been mentioned, the *Beowulf* poet never uses direct speech for a collection of people or for the *scop*. While the verb of speech 'maþelode' introduces only direct speech, some verbs of speech, such as '-cweðan', '-sprecan' or 'secgan', introduce both direct and indirect speech. Though they sometimes introduce the collective speeches and the scop's songs in the poem, those speeches and songs are expressed in indirect speech.

Let us first look at the songs by the *scop* in Hrothgar's court which are always put in indirect speech in *Beowulf*. The Danish singer performs three songs in the poem: the song of the Creation (92–98), the story of Sigemund and (and perhaps of Heremod) (875–915),

and the Finn episode (1068–1159). The reference to Heremod is not unarguably by the scop; it may be the *Beowulf* poet's own comment. As Niles says, 'Lines 888–915 … could be spoken in the voice of either the scop or the author'.[35] Bonjour also suggests that 'we may consider the whole episode as being indeed a hymn in praise of Beowulf, to which both the court poet and the *Beowulf* poet contribute in a subtle way'.[36] Whether the Finn episode is in indirect or direct speech is also a disputed matter. Although Klaeber does not treat the episode as direct speech, many editors do.[37] This disagreement seems rooted in the uncertainty of when the performance starts. The syntactic problem at issue here makes one thing clear: the onset of the Finn episode is not demarcated from the narrative in the same unambiguous way as the other passages of direct speech are. It therefore seems unlikely that the poet treated it as direct speech. I shall return to these points, but meanwhile let me assume that the three songs are in indirect speech.

Unlike the passages of indirect speech for a group of people or the characters, which are invariably short (see below), the *scop*'s songs have significant length: the Finn episode and the episodes of Sigemund and Heremod have ninety-two lines and forty-one lines respectively. The song of the Creation is not very long, having only seven lines, though it is much longer than the collective or the characters' passages of indirect speech. Its brevity is understandable in the light of narrative significance, as it happens before the hero comes into the story, and it is thus still in the prologue of the main story.

There are similarities in presentation between the songs in *Beowulf* and those by court singers in classical epics. There are three songs by Demodocus, the minstrel in Alcinous' court in the *Odyssey* (8. 74–82, 499–520, and 266–366). Demodocus' song about Ares and Aphrodite (266–367) is particularly comparable with the episodes of Sigemund

[35] Niles, *Beowulf*, p. 38.
[36] Bonjour, *Digressions*, p. 48.
[37] For editors' treatments of this episode concerning speech, see Gerald Richman, 'Poet and Scop in *Beowulf*', *In Geardagum*, 21 (2000), 61–91. Richman himself considers that the songs by the scop are in direct speech and are not the summaries of the songs. See also Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, note on 1063–1159, p. 180.

and Heremod: they start with indirect speech and segue into independent clauses and then, halfway through, become more like the poet's voice. The episodes of Sigemund and Heremod start with a passage of indirect speech led by the conjunction 'that'. A thane of Hrothgar, having confirmed Grendel's death and joyously riding back from his lair with his comrades, improvises a song to praise Beowulf, comparing him with the legendary figure, Sigemund:

welhwylc gecwæð
þæt he fram Sigemunde[s] secgan hyrde
ellendædum, uncuþes fela,
Wælsinges gewin, wide siðas,
þara þe gumena bearn gearwe ne wiston,
fæhðe ond fyrena, buton Fitela mid hine,
þonne he swulces hwæt secgan wolde,
eam his nefan, swa hie a wæron
æt niða gehwam nydgesteallan;
hæfdon eal fela eotena cynnes
sweordum gesæged. (874b– 84a)

[Almost everything that he had heard said about Sigemund he told; about his deeds of courage and much that was unfamiliar, the struggle of this son of Wæls – the wide wanderings, the feuds and the crimes – of which the children of men were not entirely aware, except for Fitela who was with him when he was inclined to tell him something of such matters, as an uncle to his nephew, since in every hostility they had always been comrades in need. Very many of the giants' stock they had laid low with their swords.]

According to the text I use, the first clause with an apparent construction of indirect

speech is followed by seven independent clauses, if one includes the episode of Heremod. Because there is only one verb of speech at the beginning of the episode (i.e., 'gecwæð' in line 874b), we do not know for certain how far the verb governs the following clauses and whether it includes the episode of Heremod as a part of the scop's song. The only implication that it may be the scop's song is the word 'Hwilum', which is used three times in this riding scene (lines 864a, 867b, and 916a) to mark narrative units, effectively conveying a sense of the progress of their horse-riding journey. The episodes are placed between two 'Hwilum's (867b and 916a).

This blurring of the voices of the singer and that of the poet also occurs in Demodocus' song about Ares and Aphrodite (266–367) in the *Odyssey*. Demodocus sings with the lyre, while Phaeacians are performing a splendid dance in front of Odysseus:

> αὐτὰρ ὁ φορμίζων ἀνεβάλλετο καλὸν ἀείδειν
> ἀμφ᾽ Ἄρεος φιλότητος ἐυστεφάνου τ᾽ Ἀφροδίτης,
> ὡς τὰ πρῶτα μίγησαν ἐν Ἡφαίστοιο δόμοισι
> λάθρῃ, πολλὰ δ᾽ ἔδωκε, λέχος δ᾽ ἤσχυνε καὶ εὐνὴν
> Ἡφαίστοιο ἄνακτος. ἄφαρ δέ οἱ ἄγγελος ἦλθεν
> Ἥλιος, ὃ σφ᾽ ἐνόησε μιγαζομένους φιλότητι. (8. 266–71)
>
> [Next the minstrel struck the chords in prelude to his sweet lay and sang of the love of Ares and fair-crowned Aphrodite, how first they lay together in the house of Hephaestus secretly; and Ares gave her many gifts, and shamed the bed of the lord Hephaestus. But immediately Helios came to him to tell him, for he had seen them lying together in love.]

The song starts with the prepositional phrase 'ἀμφ᾽ Ἄρεος φιλότητος ἐυστεφάνου τ᾽ Ἀφροδίτης' to announce the theme of the song followed by a passage of indirect speech 'ὡς τὰ πρῶτα μίγησαν ἐν Ἡφαίστοιο δόμοισι λάθρῃ …', and then segues into independent

claluses, 'ἄφαρ δέ οἱ ἄγγελος ἦλθεν Ἥλιος', stretching for about a hundred lines. The song is getting more detailed as the story progresses, even having direct speech within the song.

ὁ δ᾽ εἴσω δώματος ᾖει,
ἔν τ᾽ ἄρα οἱ φῦ χειρί, ἔπος τ᾽ ἔφατ᾽ ἔκ τ᾽ ὀνόμαζε·
"δεῦρο, φίλη, λέκτρονδε τραπείομεν εὐνηθέντες·
οὐ γὰρ ἔθ᾽ Ἥφαιστος μεταδήμιος, ἀλλά που ἤδη
οἴχεται ἐς Λῆμνον μετὰ Σίντιας ἀγριοφώνους."
ὣς φάτο, τῇ δ᾽ ἀσπαστὸν ἐείσατο κοιμηθῆναι. (8. 290–95)

[And Ares came into the house and clasped her hand and spoke and addressed her: "Come, love, let us to bed and take our joy, couched together. For Hephaestus is no longer here in the land, but has now gone, no doubt, to Lemnos, to visit the Sintians of savage speech." So he spoke, and a welcome thing it seemed to her to lie with him.]

At this point, it is difficult to discern which of the two, Demodocus or Homer, is talking. The narrative becomes so vivid that we may almost forget the fact that it is the singer's song. It is only when we reach the phrase 'ταῦτ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἀοιδὸς ἄειδε περικλυτός' [This song the famous minstrel sang] (367) – Homer repeats it after each song of Domodocus (8. 84 and 521) – that the narrative fiction of a song is recalled. The situation here accords with what Klaeber says of the episodes of Sigemund and Heremod: 'From indirect discourse the account passes almost imperceptibly to direct statement, and when the Heremod theme is taken up, we feel like questioning whether Hroðgar's thane has not been altogether forgotten by the A[nglo-Saxon] poet.'[38]

[38] Klaeber, note on 867b–915, p. 158.

Although the song of the Creation in *Beowulf* has often been referred to in connection with a song of creation in the *Aeneid*, the presentation of those songs is not similar syntactically.[39] The Danish scop sings the song in the newly-built hall Heorot:

Sægde se þe cuþe
frumsceaft fira feorran reccan,
cwæð þæt se ælmihtiga eorðan worh(te),
wlitebeorhtne wang, swa wæter bebugeð,
gesette sigehreþig sunnan ond monan,
leoman to leohte landbuendum,
ond gefrætwade foldan sceatas
leomum ond leafum, lif eac gesceop
cynna gehwylcum þara ðe cwice hwyrfaþ. (90b–98)

[He who was skilled in recounting the creation of men in time distant declared that the Almighty made the earth, a plain radiant to look upon which water encircles; he, taking delight in his achievement, established the sun and the moon, those luminaries, as light for those living in the world; he embellished the earth's surfaces with branches and with leaves; life too he created in each of those species which go their vital ways.]

The punctuation of this quotation is of course editorial; and it would not be impossible to put a full stop somewhere before the last word 'hwyrfaþ', for example, after 'bebugeð' or 'leafum', but all the same it is an interpretative or stylistic choice and not a syntactic requirement and there is no justifiable reason to chop this sentence into more than one, when it is comprisable within a single sentence. It is noteworthy, however, that the

[39] See Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, note on 90–8, p. 121.

presentation of this song is similar to that of the other songs in that it also segues from 'that' clause to independent finite verbs. In the *Aeneid*, on the other hand, the song of creation sung by the court singer of Dido's palace Iopas comprises a list of subjects. He sings the song at the welcoming feast for Aeneas and his crew:

> hic canit errantem lunam solisque labores,
> unde hominum genus et pecudes, unde imber et ignes,
> Arcturum pluviasque Hyadas geminosque Triones;
> quid tantum Oceano properent se tinguere soles
> hiberni, vel quae tardis mora noctibus obstet. (1. 742–46)
>
> [He sings of the wandering moon and the sun's toils; whence sprang man and beast, whence rain and fire; of Arcturus, the rainy Hyades and the twin Bears; why wintry suns make such haste to dip themselves in Ocean, or what delay stays the slowly passing nights.][40]

While the Anglo-Saxon counterpart is only possibly readable as having one long subordinate 'that' clause, the Latin passage consists of one main verb ('canit') with many direct objects, i.e., five accusative nouns ('luman', 'labores', 'Arcturum', 'Hyadas' and 'Triones') and four indirect questions ('unde hominum …', 'unde imber …', 'quid tantum …', and 'quae tardis …'). Even the indirect questions are not long and have no finite verbs ('unde hominum genus et pecudes' and 'unde imber et ignes'). Virgil thus simply itemizes the topics of the song briefly to represent the singer's performance. The songs in *Beowulf* all follow the same pattern of indirect speech morphing into finite verbs to blur the scop's and the narrative voices (as Homer also does), where Virgil is clearer that it is an indirect

[40] All quotations and translations from the *Aeneid* are from Virgil, *Aeneid,* trans. by H. R. Fairclough, rev. by G. P. Goold, 2 vols, Loeb Classical Library 63 and 64 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

report. Even though the song of the Creation in *Beowulf* is, in other ways, comparable with the counterpart in the *Aeneid*, their syntactic forms are different, and it is the syntactic form of the scop's songs that preserves the usual ambiguity.

What can be inferred from the presentation of the songs by the court singers in the classical epics is that the poets do not represent the incorporated songs as actual records of the performance but give us the summaries of the songs in indirect speech. As we have seen, Virgil's song of creation is apparently a synopsis of the song. It does not seem impossible that those songs by the *scop* in *Beowulf* were presented in indirect speech in the tradition of heroic epic poetry, given that *Beowulf* shares many other heroic elements with the *Aeneid* and the Homeric epics, as scholars have noted for a long time.[41] Robert P. Creed, among others, draws attention to the similarity in the usage of oral singers in the narrative, saying: 'There is an air of spontaneity in the portrayal of his song making.'[42] In addition, the presentation of their performances in both poems, I think, is also analogous. Some scholars regard their songs as direct speech even if they are lacking in *inquit* formulae, but songs, which involve music, are, in realistic terms, impossible to reproduce in verse and it is only by an obviously later literary convention that such a liberty can be taken. This may well be likened to a scene from a novel in which a character is playing the piano. It would be a false pretense to relay a scop directly (since that was a musical performance), and therefore putting the *scop*'s songs in indirect speech is a way of respecting verisimilitude.

Furthermore, many critics have noted that the *scop*'s songs serve to give contrast or comparison to the narrative in various ways. On the song of the Creation, Klaeber

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[41] H. Munro Chadwick describes various features common to *Beowulf* and the Homeric poems: *The Heroic Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), pp. 320–43; John Nist argues general similarities of structure and texture between *Beowulf* and the classical epics: '*Beowulf* and the Classical Epics', *College English* 24 (1963), 257–62. For specific narrative techniques common to those epics, see Bruce Louden, 'A Narrative Technique in *Beowulf* and Homeric Epic', *Oral Tradition*, 11 (1996), 346–62, (pp. 357–58).

[42] Robert P. Creed, 'The Singer Looks at His Sources', in *Studies in Old English Literature in Honor of Arthur G. Brodeur*, ed. by Stanley B. Greenfield (Eugene: University of Oregon Books, 1963), pp. 44–52 (p. 46).

observes: 'The rare note of joy in the beauty of nature contrasts impressively with the melancholy inspired by the dreary, somber abode of Grendel.'[43] The song also serves to enhance the splendor of the newly built great hall Heorot by following the description of its construction. Bonjour says of the episodes of Sigemund and Heremod: 'Between Beowulf and both of them there is at the same time a parallelism and a contrast, partly implicit, partly explicit, and not devoid of a slight dramatic irony.'[44] Robinson sees the episodes as an example of the poet's extended appositive style, stating that 'a favorite means of characterization in *Beowulf* is drawing of parallel portraits so that the juxtaposed descriptions imply through similarity or contrast the essential qualities of a character'.[45] He considers that the episodes serve to characterize Beowulf. As I have said, we do not know for certain if the episode of Heremod is supposed to belong to the *scop*'s song or to the narrative voice. But if the main purpose of mentioning Heremod is characterization, the blurring of the voices of the *scop* and the poet can naturally occur. Robinson also states of the parallels that the Finn episode offers:

> The theme of vengeance taken and honor preserved is overlaid in the poet's summary with the tragedy of Hildeburh. Since the Finn episode is carefully juxtaposed with Wealtheow's major scene in the poem – her appeal to Beowulf to support her sons – we can assume that the poet's telling of the story has been shaped for the purpose of stressing a poignant parallel with Wealtheow's tragic fate[46]

Fulk, Bjork, and Niles point out that the Finn episode and a fragmentary Old English poem *The Fight at Finnsburg* have very different emphases: the Finn episode 'highlights

[43] Klaeber, note on 90–98, p. 131.
[44] Bonjour, *Digressions*, p. 47.
[45] Robinson, *Appositive Style*, pp.21–22.
[46] Robinson, *Appositive Style*, p.26.

both the tragic element of the situation and the mixture of shame and seething rage presumably felt by the Danes', while the fragment 'displays features expected of a heroic lay' with 'a narrative focus fixed upon heroic action'.[47] If the poet uses the summarized stories of the songs with emphasis on some narrative parts which he might have liked to use for contrast or comparison, the songs would inevitably differ from the lays as sung. Demodocus' song about the infidelity of Aphrodite may serve to give contrast to the fidelity of Penelope, Odysseus' wife, who faithfully waits for him to return for more than twenty years, but this connection is very loose and probably factitious, and it certainly does not work in the same way as the episodes in *Beowulf* do. The *Beowulf* poet's appositive style, while presenting the *scop*'s songs in the epic tradition, seems to add to them an effect which the Homeric epic lacks.

The other category for whom the *Beowulf* poet never uses direct speech is a collection of people. There are five scenes in which the speech of a group of people is referred to. The poet tells us:

1. How the Danes pray pagan gods after the attacks of Grendel:

   Hwilum hie geheton æt *hæ*rgtrafum
   wigweorþunga, wordum **bædon**
   þæt him gastbona geoce gefremede
   wið þeodþreaum. (175–78a)

   [On occasions they offered homage to idols at pagan shrines and prayed aloud that the slayer of souls might afford them help against their collective sufferings.]

2. What the Danes say, riding back from Grendel's lair after Beowulf defeats him:

   monig oft **gecwæð**
   þætte suð ne norð be sæm tweonum
   ofer eormengrund oþer nænig

[47] Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, p. 278. See also Bonjour, *Digressions*, p. 58.

under swegles begong selra nære

rondhæbbendra, rices wyrðra. (857b–61)

[repeatedly, many a man declared that south or north throughout the mighty earth amidst the encircling oceans there was no other shield-bearing man beneath the bright sky's vault more noble, more worthy of dominion]

3. How the Danes are amazed at the arm of Grendel:

Æghwylc **gecwæð**

þæt him heardra nan hrinan wolde

iren ærgod þæt ðæs ahlæcan

blodge beadufolme onberan wolde. (987b–90)

[Each man declared that no iron sword, though belonging to tough warriors and efficacious in the past, that may have been meant to take off the monster's bloody weapon of a hand, would have touched him.]

4. How the old Danes wrongly interpret the lake smeared with blood after Beowulf defeats Grendel's mother beneath the water:

Blondenfeaxe,

gomele ymb godne ongeador **spræcon**

þæt hig þæs æðelinges eft ne wendon,

þæt he sigehreðig secean come

mærne þeoden (1594b–98a)

[Grey-haired old men declared to each other that from now on they held out no hope for the prince that he might come jubilant in victory to visit their renowned lord.]

5. How the Geats praise their renowned king at his funeral:

cwædon þæt he wære wyruldcyning[a]

manna mildust ond mon(ðw)ærust,

leodum liðost ond lofgeornost. (3180–82)

[They said that among the kings of this world he had been the most compassionate of men, and the most humane, the most kindly to his people and the most eager for good repute.]

These passages depict the general reactions of people to the events that the hero and his enemies are involved with. Although they are expressed in indirect speech, the information that they provide is not insignificant – passage 4 allows us to make sense of why the Danes, including the king Hrothgar, do not wait longer for Beowulf to come out and, above all, passage 5 is the closing of the poem. The reason why collective utterances are in indirect speech may again be related to verisimilitude: a group of people do not speak in unison in real life. It is therefore more natural to represent their utterances in indirect speech. This naturalistic approach to expressing collective utterances can also be paralleled in the Homeric epic. Odysseus' crew, desperately fleeing from Polyphemus, a cannibal giant, try to restrain their reckless leader from provoking the Cyclops: 'σχέτλιε, τίπτ᾽ ἐθέλεις ἐρεθιζέμεν ἄγριον ἄνδρα;' [Stubborn man, why will you provoke to anger a savage…?] (9. 494–99). This is an episode narrated by Odysseus, and his crew's utterances are put in direct speech, but interestingly, the hero says that his crew checked him 'ἄλλοθεν ἄλλος' [one after another], not 'in a single voice'. This phrase suggests that the hero does not pretend to recall what his comrades said as a collective but vividly conveys the gist of what they said serially using direct speech.[48]

In other Old English poems, on the other hand, direct speech as well as indirect speech is sometimes used for a group of people.[49] In *Elene*, for example, collective direct speech is used seven times: five times for the Jewish people (397–403, 538–46, 588b–97, 892b–93, and 1120–24), once for the queen's messengers (551b–54), and once for angels within

[48] In the narrative by Odysseus, there is another speech where the same phrase 'ἄλλοθεν ἄλλος' is used in the introduction to direct speech, in which Odysseus' crew again try to restrain the hero from killing the disobedient Eurylochus rashly (10. 443–45), while there occur two instances of chorus direct speech (10. 419–21 and 472–74).

[49] Passages of indirect speech for a collection of people: lines 169–71, 175–88, 571–72 and 984–88 in *Elene*; lines 1639–42 in *Andreas*.

Judas' speech (750–53a). Similarly, in *Andreas*, it is used for his followers (405–14) and people in Mermedonia (1602–06 and 1717–22). These hagiographical poems have Latin source texts, and in these instances, they are following their Latin sources.[50] In *Elene*, all the passages of direct speech for the collective utterances are based on those in its sources, though some passages of direct speech in Latin were changed into indirect speech (see below). Therefore, it is not deducible from those Old English poems whether collective utterances put in unison direct speech are common practice in Old English poetry or whether the *Beowulf* poet consciously chose not to use what is in fact the non-naturalistic device of direct speech for collective utterances.[51] But it needs to be remembered that in real life people do not speak with one voice, and are represented as doing so in texts only by what seems, again, to be a literary convention that had not yet developed in English (the hagiographic poems are not only not securely counterevidence, but are in any case later) and this may be what the poet wanted to respect in his mimesis.

But other factors also have a part to play. In the hagiographic poems (which are almost certainly later than *Beowulf*) groups of people not only talk unanimously, reacting to some events, typically miracles, but also speak to an individual or people in the form of dialogue. In *Elene*, unison direct speech is used twice (892b–93 and 1120–24) to express people's reactions after seeing miraculous signs. The Jews say, for example, after witnessing a sign revealing where the nails which pierced Christ's hands and feet are hidden, 'Nu we seolfe geseoð | sigores tacen, / soðwundor godes [Now we see for ourselves the sign of victory, a true miracle of God ...] (1120–21a). They are also sometimes involved in dialogue with Judas (538–46) or Elene (397–403 and 588b–97). Those collective speeches play an important role in the narrative and it is inevitable to express such collective utterances in direct speech just as in the sources. This situation is lacking in *Beowulf*. The epic poem

[50] The primary source of the Old English *Andreas* is assumed to be a now lost Latin version of the Greek *Acts of St Andrew and St Matthew in the Land of the Cannibals*: Allen and Calder, pp. 14–15.

[51] Richman compares Old English translations with their Latin source texts and notes that choric speech tends to be avoided in Old English: 'The Stylistic Effect', pp. 83–85.

does not have such scenes where a collection of people talks in unison to an individual. It can be pointed out that there are potential episodes which could have been developed into such scenes with dialogue between Beowulf and people, however: when Beowulf decides to go to help Hrothgar to fight with Grendel, Geatish counselors give him their approval (202–03), while some Geats, including Hygelac, may have tried to persuade him not to do it (1994b–97a); and Wiglaf also says that they failed to persuade their king not to fight against the dragon (3079–83). Nevertheless, those episodes are not introduced into the narrative using direct speech, which is always distinctively framed in Old English. In *Beowulf*, a collection of people is never given an opportunity to come out to the foreground of the narrative.

The way Cynewulf transforms his Latin sources into Old English poems reveals how Anglo-Saxon poets distinguished direct speech from indirect speech in use. Although most of the collective direct speech in *Elene* is based on the sources, Cynewulf does not follow the Latin sources slavishly. He sometimes changes direct speech into indirect speech and vice versa. In three cases (169–71, 414–16, and 667–68), he changed very short passages of direct speech in Latin into indirect speech. For example, the Latin passage, 'Responderunt autem quidam ex ipsis & dixerunt: Hoc signum cælestis Dei est.' [But certain of them replied, "This is the sign of the God of heaven."] [52] is changed into:

> þa þa wisestan wordum cwædon
> for þam heremægene þæt hit heofoncyninges
> tacen wære, ond þæs tweo nære. (169–71)
>
> [Then the wisest ones declared aloud in front of the crowd that it was the symbol of the King of heaven and of this there was no doubt.]

[52] *Acta Sanctorum: The Full Text Database* <http://acta.chadwyck.co.uk> [accessed 8 January 2018].

This tells us that in Old English poetry direct speech was used for relatively long utterances. This is reasonable in the light of the way of presenting direct speech: in Old English poetry *inquits* with explicit subjects are almost mandatory. Such introduction to direct speech often takes more than a line; it is not economical to use the machinery of direct speech for something that is very short. Louviot, comparing some Old English poems with their Latin source texts, observes that Old English poets often made a very short passage of direct speech in the Latin source much longer in their poem, or otherwise changed it into a passage of indirect speech, or sometimes deleted very short passages of direct speech in the Latin source. She states: 'Such transformations are systematic enough to suggest that they do not reflect true choices, individual responses to the specificities of a given text, but an actual rule, which forces the poets to transform their source in order to meet Old English poetic standards.'[53] The passages of indirect speech by a group of people in *Beowulf* likewise seems to 'meet the Old English poetic standards', i.e., short utterances are to be put into indirect speech. And this also suggests that direct speech in Old English poetry is normally much longer than indirect speech and thus has far more weight in the narrative.

The *Beowulf* poet may have put some speeches by characters into indirect speech for the same reason. There are four passages of indirect speech by characters: three by Beowulf (199b–201, 1319b–20, and 1810–11a) and one by the Coastguard (1894–95). The four instances are:

1. When the hero has heard of Grendel's attacks, he decides to go to Denmark:

cwæð, he guðcyning
ofer swanrade secean wolde,
mærne þeoden, þa him wæs manna þearf. (199b–201)

[He declared that he wanted to go seeking the warrior-king, the famed prince,

[53] Louviot, *Direct Speech*, p. 26.

across the swan-road, since he was in need of men.].

2. After Grendel's mother has killed one of Hrothgar's thanes, the king calls for Beowulf:

frægn gif him wære

æfter neodlaðu[m] niht getæse. (1319b–20)

[He (Beowulf) asked whether, in view of the urgent summons, his night had passed agreeably.]

3. After Beowulf has returned from the lair of Grendel, having defeated Grendel's mother, he gives back the sword to Unferth:

cwæð, he þone guðwine godne tealde,

wigcræftigne (1810–11a)

[(Beowulf) said he regarded that friend in battle as an efficient one, strong in the fray].

4. When the Coastguard meets again the triumphant Geats at the shore who are ready to set sail for their country:

cwæð þæt wilcuman Wedera leodum

scaþan scirhame to scipe foron. (1894–95)

[(the Coastguard) declared that they went aboard ship as warriors in shining armour whose return would be a joy to the Weder-Geatish people.]

These passages of indirect speech are very short, averaging 1.9 lines – shorter than collective speeches, which average 2.8 lines of length. It may also be worth noting that these passages of indirect speech are reactions to the events or describe what happens after some main events have occurred. The shortness of a speech, of course, does not necessarily mean that it is peripheral. The first one is not unimportant in that it is the hero's very first speech, but it can still be regarded as Beowulf's reaction to the events in Denmark, and the poet may have wished to keep the hero in the background at this stage in order to introduce him into the narrative in a gradual tantalizing manner.

I would like to mention some syntactic features observable in the presentation of indirect speech which may show by contrast how clearly framed is direct speech in *Beowulf*. Although the way the poet starts indirect speech is not unclear except for the case of the Finn episode (see below), the way he embeds the passages of indirect speech varies, particularly in regard to the metrical line. There are twelve passages of indirect speech. Two of them have an asyndetic construction: '**cwæð**, he guðcyning' (199b) and '**cwæð**, he þone guðwine' (1810a). The former starts the b-verse, the latter the a-verse. In nine cases, the reported speech is introduced invariably by a subordinate conjunction: eight by 'þæt' and one by 'gif'. The positions of the verbs of speech have three patterns. In three cases, the verb of speech 'cweðan' has the initial position of the a-verse immediately followed by a 'that' clause: '**cwæð þæt** se ælmihtiga' (92a); '**cwæð þæt** wilcuman' (1894a); '**cwædon þæt** he wære' (3180a). In one case, the verb of speech 'frægn' has the initial position of the b-verse immediately followed by a 'if' clause: '**frægn gif** him wære' (1319b). In five cases, the three verbs of speech 'gecwæð' 'spræcon' and 'bædon' have the final position of the b-verse followed by a 'that' clause which starts the a-verse of the next line: 'wordum **bædon / þæt** him gastbona' (176b–77a); 'monig oft **gecwæð / þætte** suð ne norð' (857b–58a); 'welhwylc **gecwæð / þæt** he fram Sigemunde[s]' (874b–75a); 'Æghwylc **gecwæð / þæt** him heardra nan' (987b–88a); 'ongeador **spræcon / þæt** hig þæs æðelinges' (1595b–96a). In the above five cases, passages of indirect speech start with the long line, while in the former six cases they start in the middle of a half-line. The passages of indirect speech are thus more incorporated into the metrical line, compared with those of direct speech. The positions of the verbs of speaking are also various.

However, the verbs of speech introducing indirect speech, as well as the syntactic pattern of those sentences, does not vary. The verb '-cweðan' is markedly used: 'gecwæð' is used three times (857, 874, and 987); 'cwæð' four times (92, 199, 1810, and 1894); 'cwædon' once (3180). The other very common verbs 'spræcon' and 'frægn' are also used

once each. Overall, it can be said that indirect speech in *Beowulf* is introduced in a consistent way.

In this respect, the Finn episode is a notable exception; its introductory passage departs from the poet's norm: it lacks both a common verb of speech and a subordinate conjunction 'that'. The episode is presented by Hrothgar's scop who entertains people by singing and playing the lyre at the feast celebrating Beowulf's victory over Grendel:

> Þær wæs sang ond sweg samod ætgædere
> fore Healfdenes hildewisan,
> gomenwudu greted, gid oft wrecen,
> ðonne Healgamen, Hroþgares scop
> æfter medobence **mænan** scolde
> Finnes eafer*an*; ða hie se fær begeat,
> hæleð Healf-Dena, Hnæf Scyldinga
> in Freswæle feallan scolde. (1063–70)
>
> [There in the presence of Healfdene's son, the battle-leader, singing took place to the accompaniment of music, the beguiling wooden lyre had been plucked and often a lay recited, when Healgamen, Hrothgar's scop, was to relate the sons of Finn along the mead-bench; when the sudden attack came upon them, the hero of the Half-Danes, Hnæf of the Scyldings, was to fall in the Frisian slaughter.][54]

In this quotation, the episode starts line 1068b 'ða hie se fær begeat'. However, there is much disagreement among editors about where the episode starts, since the transition from line 1068 to 1069 produces a problem without emendation. In the above quotation, the editors consider the word 'healgamen' as a proper name (i.e., the name of Hrothgar's

[54] The translation from lines 1066 to 1070 is mine, as Bradley's text is different.

scop), hence it is the subject of the verb 'mænan', and 'Finnes eafer*an*', emended from the dative 'eaferum', is the object of the verb. Some editors emend the line by adding the proposition 'be' before the word 'Finnes', regarding 'healgamen' as a common noun, meaning 'entertainment in the hall' and the object of the verb 'mænan'.[55] Others consider the episode starts with line 1068a without emendation, interpreting the meaning of 'Finnes eaferum' as 'at the hands of the sons of Finn'.[56] Because of this problem, J. R. R. Tolkien assumes that there must have been a one-line omission between lines 1068 and 1069.[57] I incline to the same view, given the poet's normal way of starting the scop's songs and the other passages of indirect speech: when a verb of speech is at the final position in the b-verse, the next a-verse starts with a noun clause, typically led by the conjunction 'that'. Here, supposing the verbal phrase 'mænan scolde' functions as an *inquit*, the next line should start with a noun clause according to the poet's normal usage. There is in fact a comparable instance in *Widsith*, though the verb 'mænan' is not at the end of the b-verse:

> Forþon ic mæg singan ond secgan spell,
> **mænan** fore mengo in meoduhealle
> **hu** me cynegode cystum dohten. (*Widsith* 54–56)[58]
>
> [I can sing, therefore, and tell a tale, and mention before the assemblage in the mead-hall how royal benefactors have been generously kind to me.]

This is the scop Widsith's own word and he is describing his performance in a royal court. It therefore seems probable that a line which start with a noun conjunction, possibly

[55] Orchard inserts 'be' here, regarding this transition as 'the *Beowulf*-poet's deliberate blurring of events in Hrothgar's hall and events within the episode itself': *Companion*, p. 179.
[56] Jack, p.30; Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, note on 1066–70, pp. 180–81.
[57] J. R. R. Tolkien, *Finn and Hengest: The Fragment and the Episode*, ed. by Alan Bliss (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982), pp. 92–94.
[58] Mitchell and Robinson, p. 198.

either 'þæt' or 'hu', was omitted in *Beowulf* here. But there is, of course, no means to prove it, nor is there a sufficient number of comparable passages of indirect speech to support it.

Klaeber states that indirect speech in *Beowulf* 'is properly preferred for less important functions (in "general narrative") and in the case of utterances by a collection of people'.[59] Comparison with other Old English poems and classical epics shows that *Beowulf* has more apparent factors that influence the choice between direct and indirect speech; in other Old English poems or in the classical epics, scenes and speakers are not so much the factors to decide whether or not direct speech is used as in *Beowulf*. This suggests again that the poet used direct speech very selectively, giving it more narrative prominence.

Conclusion

As Klaeber observes, the speeches in *Beowulf* are certainly given 'prominent and rather independent position'.[60] This feature manifests itself in the *Beowulf* poet's use of the metrical line in relation to direct speech: speeches normally start and end with the full line; those starting at the b-verse always happen 'in the middle of either groups of alternating speeches or sequences of speeches by the same characters', as Handelman notes.[61] In other words, all sequential speeches in *Beowulf*, either in the form of dialogue or by the same character, start and end with the full line. These features of direct speech indicate that the poet embedded the speeches in the poem very carefully.

His way of distributing direct speech in the poem also has distinct features; the poet does not use direct speech to describe the battles, and never uses direct speech for collective utterances or the scop's songs. One reason for the absence of speech in the battle

[59] Klaeber, pp. lv–lvi .
[60] Klaeber, p. lv.
[61] Handelman, note 8, p. 477.

scenes may be the fact that Beowulf's enemies are non-negotiable monsters; speech in this poem is usually used for bond-creating or –cementing – i.e., for social bonds rather than the opposite (fighting) and for minimizing conflict. This element is what Beowulf's conflicts do not have. Only by killing the enemies does Beowulf achieve his purposes. Nevertheless, it would still be possible to make the hero speak on any occasion, as is seen in the classical epics, which the poet did not attempt to do.

It can be pointed out that both collective utterances and the scop's songs are not realistically expressible in direct speech: the former does not occur in real life, and the latter will have its own tune and metre. The syntax the poet uses to describe the scop's songs also shows that the poet did not attempt to present them in direct speech; they are effectively integrated into the narrative, probably because their function is, though they are presented through the description of the scop's singing, to give parallels to the characters or the story. They are not directly related to the immediate story and thus do not have to be given 'prominent position'.

In other Old English poems, especially in the Cynewulfian *Elene* and *Juliana*, direct speech is used differently; dialogue between the protagonist and the other characters is the most important part of the narrative. The exchanges themselves are the tool for achieving the protagonists' purposes. In this respect, direct speech in *Beowulf* functions very differently from that in other poems. What we have seen in this chapter clearly suggests that the passages of direct speech in *Beowulf* are treated with great care and they are used to represent (mostly positive) social moves in the narrative. The only person in this poem who uses speech for hostile purposes is Unferth, who is presented as perversely motivated to kill those who should be his allies (his kin). In the next chapters, I shall explore what role direct speech in *Beowulf* plays in the narrative, focusing more on passages of direct speech themselves.

Chapter 4

Inquits and direct speech

Introduction

As we have seen in Chapter 1, the *inquits* in *Beowulf* give us clues about the contents of the speeches which they introduce. In this chapter, I will closely examine each speech or sequence of speeches and consider the relation between *inquits* and the contents of the speeches, focusing more on the speeches themselves.

In *Beowulf*, most of the speeches are introduced by at least one of the common verbs of speech, such as 'frægn', 'andswarode', 'maþelode', 'cwæð', 'spræc' and 'sægde'. Though the verb 'maþelode' predominates, it seems that the poet distinguishes it from the other verbs of speech 'cwæð', 'spræc' and 'sægde', according to the contents of the speeches they introduce. I will look at the speeches in turn, dividing them into three groups: those introduced by 'frægn' and 'andswarode', those by 'maþelode', and those by 'cwæð', 'spræc' and 'sægde'. I hope to show again that the verbs of speech match the contents of the speeches to such an extent as to characterise them.[1]

'Frægn' and 'andswarode'

'Frægn' and 'andswarode' are employed only twice each, both in the early part of the poem, to introduce questions and answers, just as one would expect. Both scenes where the dialogues are introduced by the verbs deal with official enquiries: the Coastguard questions the Geats who have just landed in Denmark and the herald Wulfgar questions them at the entrance to the Danish royal hall Heorot. In *Beowulf*,

[1] Perelman also points out, in the light of speech act theory, that 'the narrator's descriptions of illocutionary acts are never ironic' (p. 73).

'frægn' is used when the enquirer genuinely needs the answer to his question so that he may undertake the next action accordingly. The answer affects his decision: the speaker does not ask questions out of mere curiosity. The Coastguard needs to know the reason why a band of armed warriors has come to his country: as a 'border official', he needs to know whether they are friends or foes. Likewise, it is the duty of the herald Wulfgar to question unexpected visitors to the hall to establish what status the warriors have, or whether they are respectable enough to see the king. The other three usages of the verb 'frignan' in the poem show the same traits (see Chapter 1).

Before examining the two speeches introduced by 'frægn', it may be appropriate to clarify the difference between those introduced by 'frægn' and those containing direct questions but not introduced by a verb of asking. There are five speeches containing direct questions in *Beowulf*. Two of these are not introduced by a verb of asking. One is the speech by Unferth (506–10a) and the other the speech by the old Heathobard warrior (2047–52).

Unferth starts his speech with a question at the welcoming feast for the Geats. The *inquit* 'maþelode' and the periphrasis 'onband beadurune' introduce his speech (see Chapter 1):

> 'Eart þu se Beowulf, se þe wið Brecan wunne
> on sidne sæ, ymb sund flite,
> ðær git for wlence wada cunnedon
> ond for dolgilpe on deop wæter
> aldrum neþdon? …' (506–10a)

['Are you that Beowulf who pitted himself against Breca, and competed at swimming in the open sea, where out of pride the two of you tackled the ocean and for the sake of a foolish boast risked your lives in deep water? …']

It is obvious that he does not ask the question because he needs the information: he already knows the hero's identity. The question is a rhetorical one. The real purpose of his question is to taunt Beowulf, as the introduction to his speech indicates: 'Wæs him Beowulfes sið, / modges merefaran, | micel æfþunca' [To him the enterprise of Beowulf, the courageous seafarer, was a great insult] (501b–02).

Likewise, the old Heathobard also starts his speech with a question, his intention being not to get information but to provoke anger in his young comrade:

> "Meaht ðu, min wine, mece gecnawan,
> þone þin fæder to gefeohte bær
> under heregriman hindeman siðe,
> dyre iren, þær hyne Dene slogon,
> weoldon wælstowe, syððan Wiðergyld læg,
> æfter hæleþa hryre, hwate Scyldungas? …" (2047–52)

["Can you recognize that blade, my friend, the precious iron sword which your father carried into battle on his last expedition in vizored war-helmet – where the Danes killed him, and the field of slaughter, following the heroes' defeat? …"]

Again, the real purpose of his speech is already mentioned in the introduction to the speech: 'wigbealu weccean' [to arouse evil of war] (2046a). Shippey says that this question of the old warrior 'has two possible answers':

> If no, then that might seem strange, given the strong weapon-ancestry connections evident elsewhere in the poem: does the young warrior lack

> family feeling? But if yes, then that is even worse, for what is strange then is the lack of response, of attempt to recapture: the accusation lurking there is cowardice.[2]

Using a modern concept of discourse, the Face Threatening Act, developed by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson, Shippey points out that the question 'constitutes an unmistakable example of the deliberate and carefully honed Face Threatening Act'.[3] There is a possibility, of course, that the young warrior may fail to recognize his father's sword unless the old warrior points it out, simply because he is young. It is apparent in any case that the old warrior does not ask it because he wants the mere information of 'yes' or 'no'. Both Unferth and the old Heathobard are not asking to get information they do not know.[4] The questions they utter thus are rhetorical.

Editors of the poem have normally treated these lines as direct questions. Mary Blockley, however, objects to this editorial punctuation and states that these are not questions in the first place. She shows that word order cannot signify sentence types in Old English poetry and argues that these lines should be taken as statements or declarations.[5] She may be right, and it is possible that the Anglo-Saxons did not consider them to be direct questions. It is in any case obvious, however, that these

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[2] Shippey, 'Principles', p. 117.
[3] Shippey, 'Principles', p. 117.
[4] Perelman differentiates those speeches introduced by the verbs of asking from those introduced by other verbs of speech, using Searle's speech act theory and shows in detail how Unferth's question is 'an infelicitous act of interrogation', violating the sincerity and essential conditions that Searle sets for questions (p. 73 and pp. 117–22).
[5] Mary Blockley, *Aspects of Old English Poetic Syntax: Where Clauses Begin* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), pp. 19–46. She points out that 'in the surviving poetry, seven of the eight other instances of clause-initial *eart þu* have never been treated as being anything but declarative' (pp. 35–36). She also shows some examples of statements that start with a modal verb and a second-person pronoun, such lines as: 'Meaht þu Adame | eft gestyran, / gif þu his willan hæfst' [You will be able moreover to manipulate Adam if you command his desire] (*Genesis B* 568–69) (pp. 31–33).

are not genuine questions and it seems to me that the interrogative punctuation (and the intonation this implies) serves to make those verses more sarcastic and naturalistic, that is, to make Unferth's speech sound more insolent and the old warrior more resentful. The editorial punctuation may not be so misleading as Blockley considers.

Hygelac's speech also starts with questions, but this is only natural since it is introduced by the periphrastic verb of asking 'ongan … fricgcean'. As I have pointed out in Chapter 1, the difference between the speeches by the Danish officials and that by Hygelac is that the Geatish king asks those questions more out of curiosity. The question introduced by 'fricgean ongann' in line 2888 in *Genesis A* is comparable in this respect as well as the use of 'ongan': the speaker Isaac asks his father, Abraham, about the sacrifice out of curiosity rather than to make decisions:

> "Wit her fyr and sweord, frea min, habbað.
> hwær is þæt tiber þæt þu torht gode
> to þam brynegielde bringan þencest?" (2890–92)
> ['We have fire and sword here, my lord. Where is the sacrifice that you intend to bring as the burnt offering for splendid God?']

Isaac is only a child; apparently, his speech act is quite different from that of the Danish officials. Although there are too few instances of the verbs to be statistically significant, it seems possible that the *Beowulf* poet distinguishes 'frignan' and 'fricgcean' in use. It is noteworthy that the questions by Hygelac and Isaac are answered in speeches introduced by not 'andswarode', but 'maþelode'.

Hygelac's speech starts with two consecutive direct questions:

‘Hu lomp eow on lade, leofa Biowulf,
þa ðu færinga feorr gehogodest
sæcce secean ofer sealt wæter,
hilde to Hiorote? Ac ðu Hroðgare
wi*d*cuðne wean wihte gebettest,
mærum ðeodne? …’ (1987–92)

[‘How did it turn out for you on your voyage, beloved Beowulf, when you suddenly determined to go looking for strife and battle far away over the salt water at Heorot? And did you at all remedy for Hrothgar, the renowned prince, his widely notorious affliction? …’]

Shippey raises an interesting question on Hygelac’s ‘unique double question’ in his speech, assuming this is not polite, in the light of Geoffrey N. Leech’s maxims of politeness. According to Leech: ‘To engage a person in conversation, particularly if that person is a stranger or a superior … may itself be regarded as an act of presumption, for conversation implies cooperation of the part of *h*[earer] as well as *s*[peaker].’ This may be the reason, Leech says, why the statement ‘I wonder if you would lend me your coat’ is regarded as politer in English than the question ‘Will you lend me your coat?’ He explains: ‘The implicature here seems to be that *s* does not feel entitled to ask *h* a question, and therefore expresses interest in knowing the answer to the question in a manner which suggests that it is no part of *h*’s responsibility to provide it.’[6] Thus direct questions can be taken as impolite. Shippey wonders if the questions by Hygelac should be taken as “‘Banter Principle”: a rule which says that once one has reached a certain level of intimacy, rules are reversed,

[6] Geoffrey N. Leech, *Principles of Pragmatics* (London: Longman, 1983), p.141.

and impoliteness becomes polite, rudeness a sign of intimacy?'[7] Although regarding the young king's speech as 'banter' seems to go too far, given the poet says in the passage introducing his speech that Hygelac began 'to ask courteously' ('fægre fricgcean' (1985a)), his speech may be less ceremonious and more personal than most of the speeches in the poem and thus it could be seen as 'a sign of intimacy' and of a superior entitled to take liberties. And the reason why such lack of ceremony can here be deemed as an act of courtesy is that Hygelac, as king, is of superior status. What could be construed as rudeness on the part of a social inferior or social equal is not rudeness on the part of a social superior. Beowulf often mentions Hygelac's name in his speeches[8] and his affection for his king, as well as his loyalty to him, is apparent in the poem; in addition, Hygelac is likely to be close to Beowulf in age, though the king may be senior. They can be good friends. In the latter part of his speech, Hygelac sounds as if he talks to Beowulf as a close friend rather than as his lord:

'… Ic ðæs modceare
sorhwylmum seað, siðe ne truwode
leofes mannes; ic ðe lange bæd
þæt ðu þone wælgæst wihte ne grette,
lete Suð-Dene sylfe geweorðan
guðe wið Grendel. Gode ic þanc secge
þæs ðe ic ðe gesundne geseon moste.' (1992b–98)

['… I have been in anguish with the melancholy surges of heartfelt anxiety,

[7] Shippey, 'Principles', p. 125.
[8] Eleven times: lines 261, 342, 407, 435, 452, 1483, 1820, 1830, 2000, 2151, and 2434. Brodeur says: 'Although Hygelac appears in person only once, the poet manages to make him almost constantly felt throughout the poem': *Art*, p. 78.

because of the misgivings I had over the venture of a man dear to me. Long I urged on you that you should leave the South-Danes to settle the fight with Grendel themselves. I declare thanks to God that I have been allowed to see you safe again.']

Orchard pays attention to the use of the first-person pronoun 'ic' (1992, 1994, 1997, and 1998) and the second-person pronouns 'ðu' (1995) and 'ðe' (1994 and 1998) in the speech, and points out that 'Hygelac makes it clear that this is very much a personal matter between Beowulf and himself'.[9] These questions at the beginning of the speech are different in nature from those asked by the Danish officials, and the speeches seem to be introduced aptly by different verbs. This fact also corroborates the hypothesis that the poet uses *inquits* in specific senses.

Now let us return to the first two dialogues in the poem. As we have seen, they are very comparable in the light of the use of *inquits*. The structures of the dialogues are also comparable, as has been noted.[10] Both the Coastguard and Wulfgar ask for the identity of the newcomers, inform them of their own roles, and comment on the Geats, and, in return, Beowulf tells them their identity and the aims of the visit. Wulfgar's speech matches the Coastguard's.[11] The differences between the two speeches have also been noted, however; the Coastguard's speech is not only longer but more elaborate in style. According to Bjork, it contains more stylistic devices than the speech by Wulfgar.[12] As for the contents, the notable difference between the two speeches is that the Coastguard's speech contains a rather long comment on

[9] Orchard, *Companion*, p. 204.
[10] See above footnote 17 in Chapter 3.
[11] Orchard, *Companion*, p. 208.
[12] Bjork, 'Speech as Gift', pp. 1008–12. He analyses the speeches in *Beowulf* in terms of presence or absence of seven stylistic devices (envelope structure, parallelism, chiastic patterning, enjambed alliteration, generative composition, bracketing patterns, and maxims), and he finds the Coastguard's speech contains five of them, while Wulfgar's contains only one of them. See also Appendix C in his paper.

the appearance of the hero ('Næfre ic maran geseah / eorla ofer eorþan | ðonne is eower sum …' ['Never have I seen a greater nobleman on earth than is that notable person in your midst …']: 247b–48), while Wulfgar only mentions the Geats as a group ('Ne seah ic elþeodige / þus manige men | modiglicran' ['I have not seen so many men from another nation looking more intrepid']: 336b–37). Orchard considers that the Coastguard 'underlines the extraordinary nature of the Geats' arrival much more than Wulgar'.[13] This might be only natural in the light of the narrative sequence, in order to avoid unnecessary repetitions, given that the Coastguard's speech is the very first one in this poem and the hero's conversation with Wulfgar is the second in a similar setting.

However, Wulfgar's speech is not a merely simplified repetition of the Coastguard's speech and it seems to reflect their different roles. At the lexical level, there are certain developments in the envoy's speech. For example, the Coastguard uses more general expressions for armour and arms in his speech: 'searohæbbendra' [of ones who bear arms] (237b), 'byrnum' [with mail-coats] (238a), 'lindhæbbende' [shield-bearers] (245a), 'searwum' [arms] (249a) and 'wæpnum' [with weapons] (250a). Wulfgar, on the other hand, describes the arms and weapons of the Geats more adjectivally: 'fætte scyldas' [gold-plated shields] (333b), 'græge syrcan' [grey mail-shirts] (334a), 'grimhelmas' [helmets with mask] (334b), and 'heresceafta' [army-shafts] (335a). Note that the *inquit* formula to introduce Beowulf's answer to Wulfgar's enquiry also mentions his helmet, as if to reinforce Wulfgar's comments: 'word æfter spræc / heard under helme' [looking stern in his helmet, he said these words in reply] (341b–42a). This development seems to coordinate with that of the descriptions of armour and arms in the narrated part, as George Clark points out. He refers to the expressions 'beorhte frætwe' [gleaning trappings] (214b), which

[13] Orchard, *Companion*, p.209.

develops into 'syrcan hrysedon, / guðgewædo' [they shook mail-coats, war-garments] (226b–27a) and states: 'The development of these references is striking: successively they grow more specific, more detailed and more deeply significant'.[14] When the Geats land, the descriptions of their armour and arms are more general, as they are in the Coastguard's speech. Then, on their way to Heorot, the poet gives more detailed descriptions of them, with which Wulfgar's comments are compatible. This development seems to serve to differentiate their official roles: the Coastguard is more concerned with the fact of armed strangers, Wulfgar with what they may say of status. The Coastguard needs to establish whether the newcomers are friends or foes, and he has decided they are friends, declaring: 'Ic þæt gehyre, | þæt þis is hold weorod / frean Scyldinga' [I accept that this is a party of men loyal to the ruler of the Scyldings] (290–91a).[15] Wulfgar's concerns, on the other hand, may be more about their status: whether they belong to a king.[16] He guesses that they have come seeking Hrothgar 'nalles for wræcsiðum' [not because of misfortunes of exile] (338b), judging from their war gear. There is a comparable scene in *Hildebrandslied*. Hildebrand guesses his son's status from his armour: 'I see well by your armour that you have at home a good lord, that you have not yet under this rulership become an exile' (44–46).[17] The Geats have come guided by the Coastguard, so Wulfgar is aware that they have been officially admitted, though this is not explicit in the text. If they have been let pass by the Coastguard, such an elaborate interrogation as the guard conducts will not be necessary. The herald might want to know how to announce and describe them to the king.

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[14] George Clark, 'Beowulf's Armor', *ELH*, 32 (1965), 409–41 (p. 416).
[15] Baker, taking account of the Anglo-Saxon attitudes towards rhetoric, explains why Beowulf's reply has impressed the Coastguard sufficiently for him to trust the Geats: 'Beowulf the Orator', pp. 10–11.
[16] See *Beowulf With the Finnesburg Fragment*, ed. by C. L. Wrenn (London: Harrap, 1953), note on 338–39, p. 192: 'The two common reasons for a foreign chief seeking out a king would be (*a*) that he was an exile, and (*b*) for the sake of high adventure.'
[17] Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, p. 341.

Although their speeches both deviate from their initial questions, they appropriately end with urging or inducing the Geats to answer their questions, so that the dialogues naturally move on to the hero's replies. In the speeches introduced by 'andswarode', Beowulf duly answers the questions he has been asked.[18] To make this point clear, it may be useful to analyse his answers using one of the four categories of the Cooperative Principle suggested by H. P. Grice. Beowulf's speeches can be said to follow the maxims of the category Quantity:

1. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).
2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.[19]

The length of his two speeches answering the Danish officials corresponds to those of the speeches by the enquirers: the Coastguard's first speech has twenty-one lines and Beowulf's answer has twenty-six lines; Wulfgar's first speech has seven lines and Beowulf's answer has five and half lines. Beowulf answers the Coastguard with information as to who they are and where they are from. He does not reveal how to deal with the trouble the king Hrothgar is having, but neither does the Coastguard ask for any details on the purpose of his visit. Beowulf's answer to Wulfgar's question is shorter and simpler than it was to the Coastguard, just as Wulfgar's question is shorter. What exactly Wulfgar asks is: From where are you carrying gold-plated shields? Beowulf answers: 'We synt Higelaces / beodgeneatas' ['We are the companions of Hygelac, sharers of his table'] (342b–43a). This exchange seems to

[18] Shippey analyses Beowulf's replies using his own Conflictive Principle: 'Principles', pp. 120–22.
[19] H. Paul Grice, 'Logic and Conversation', in *Syntax and Semantics, Vol.3, Speech Acts*, ed. by Peter Cole and Jerry L. Morgan (London: Academic Press, 1975), pp. 41–58 (pp. 45–46).

indicate that Wulfgar asks who has provided those weapons and war-garments to you, so his answer, though short, is adequate to the enquiry. Beowulf's speeches can be seen as felicitously matching the *inquit* 'andswarode', even in the light of modern discourse theory.

The use of the verbs of asking and answering in the first pair of dialogues in *Beowulf* thus displays not only a stylistically well-patterned repetition but also contextual suitability.

'Maþelode'

As seen in Chapter 1, the verb 'maþelode' is the one most frequently used to introduce direct speech in *Beowulf*. I have suggested that the repeated use of this *inquit* may be a deliberate indication that those speeches so introduced have special importance in the narrative. Given its dominant use, the verb has unsurprisingly drawn more attention from critics than any other verb of speech in this poem. Cynewulf also uses this verb quite frequently in *Elene*, but he also employs more various verbs of speech than the *Beowulf* poet (see Chapter 1). The fact that the other *inquits* used in *Beowulf* are rather common may also make 'maþelode' stand out. Before examining each speech introduced by this *inquit* closely, I will reassess the analyses of the verb by Rissanen and by McConchie, who have explored its meaning in the poem. I will then propose that the verb 'maþelode' in *Beowulf* is employed not only to introduce speeches with the formal nature that addresses before an assembly demand, but also to flag up the narrative importance of these speeches.

Rissanen examines whose speeches the verb 'maþelode' introduces and when it is used in the poem and declares that '*maþelode* marks both the speaker and the discourse situation with importance and emphasis'.[20] According to his analysis, the

[20] Rissanen, '*Maþelian* in Old English Poetry', p. 160.

speeches of the Last Survivor, of the old Heathobard warrior and of the Messenger, which are not introduced by the *inquit*, 'do not fulfil the conditions of publicity of occasion or importance of speaker to be introduced by *maþelode'*.[21] He also notes that the verb 'never introduces indirect speech and it is avoided with utterances which have a clear discourse function, such as question or reply'.[22] He argues that this is why 'maþelode' does not introduce the scop's songs, which are put in indirect speech, or Hygelac's enquiry on Beowulf's adventures. He also adds that 'Hygelac does not share Hroþgar's dignity'. [23] Certainly, Rissanan's analysis fits some speeches introduced by the *inquit* very well, but this is not surprising, since most of the speeches in any epic poem are made by people of high rank and on a public occasion. However, his analysis does not explain why some speeches by the same character in the same place are not introduced by the verb: one made by Hrothgar (655–61) and another by Wealhtheow (1169–87), for example; both speeches are made at feasts in Heorot. He also says that the use of 'maþelode' indicates the importance of the Coastguard's position. But does it mean that the unnamed Coastguard himself is an important personage of high rank?

McConchie does not think, on the other hand, that the *inquit* is determined by status and publicness, but that some elements of the speeches introduced by the *inquit* are the factor in determining whether it is used or not. He examines the contents of the speeches in the light of the following criteria: publicness, length, courtesy, reply-option elements, gnomic elements, and material elements. He thinks that publicness is not applicable to the verb – he uses the word 'publicness' to represent such speeches as are 'exemplary or informative for both addressee and actual or possible hearers' – and he says the *inquit* 'maþelode' had already lost its

[21] Rissanen, '*Maþelian* in Old English Poetry', p. 168.
[22] Rissanen, '*Maþelian* in Old English Poetry', p. 167.
[23] Rissanen, '*Maþelian* in Old English Poetry', p. 166.

original sense when it was used in the poem. McConchie suggests that the verb tends to be used for speeches which have 'reply-option, gnomic and material elements' – he calls speeches which contain information of importance 'material speeches'. (He says that information is important because of 'being previously unknown or offering a new view of a situation, instruction, and affective elements such as hopes, expectations, promises and personal reflections'). [24] His 'material speeches' introduced by 'maþelode' are not very distinguishable from those introduced by the other verbs of speech, since he categorizes some of them as 'material', as well.[25]

I think that both analyses are right in a sense: as Rissanen says, 'maþelode' marks 'the discourse situation with importance and emphasis', and as McConchie says, the speeches introduced by 'maþelode' certainly contain 'information of importance'. McConchie claims that it is wrong to regard a speech as public and important simply because 'maþelode' introduces it, but if the verb is used for speeches with 'information of importance', the *inquit* can still serve to imply such a fact about the content it introduces. As I have shown in Chapter 1, it is unlikely that the poet repeatedly used 'maþelode' as just another verb of speech. His diction shows the most variety in the corpus. The poet thus had options, and it seems reasonable to suppose that his choices between options were motivated. I think that the formulaic use of the verb serves to mark the speeches it introduces with narrative importance.

This verb's original meaning is 'make a formal speech in front of an assembly'. Such public speeches must have had contents suitable to such occasions. People do not normally communicate something very personal or private or trivial to a group of people. 'Maþelode' seems to function to introduce speeches of a formal and public

[24] McConchie, pp. 59–68.
[25] See McConchie, pp. 66–67. He categorizes all the speeches in Part 2 of the poem as 'material'.

nature, which are something close to formal documents in the present day: they are meant to be public, even though they might not be seen by all the relevant people at once. Therefore, even if the speaker does not have many people to address, the verb can be used when he wants to deliver speeches of such a formal nature as a public or institutional person (an official, a king, etc.). It seems to me that the notion that 'maþelode' introduces speeches with formal nature and narrative importance fits the speeches introduced by the *inquit* in *Beowulf* very well, as we shall see.

There are twenty-six speeches introduced by the *inquit* in the poem. I will examine the relevant scenes in chronological order in the light of the above notion: 1. Beowulf's arrival in Denmark. 2. At the welcoming feast in Heorot. 3. After the fight with Grendel and at the celebration of Beowulf's victory. 4. Before and after the fight with Grendel's mother. 5. At Hygelac's court after Beowulf has returned home. 6. Beowulf in his old age. 7. After Beowulf's death. I hope to show that the *inquit* characterizes speeches that are public and formal, such as judgement, petition, permission, greetings, recognition, commitment, pledge, questioning, rebuttal, praise, reward, record, and injunction, as well as those that contain new information about the hero.[26]

1. Beowulf's arrival in Denmark

All the speeches introduced by 'maþelode' in the scenes of the Geats' arrival to Denmark can be considered to be made by official people, and they play a part in progressing the narrative, affecting the action of Beowulf. The *inquit* first appears in the last part of the dialogue between the hero and the Coastguard when he gives the Geats permission to enter their land:

[26] See also Appendix 2.

Weard maþelode …

'…

Ic þæt gehyre, þæt þis is hold weorod

frean Scyldinga. Gewitaþ forð beran

wæpen ond gewædu; ic eow wisige.

Swylce ic maguþegnas mine hate

wið feonda gehwone flotan eowerne,

niwtyrwydne nacan on sande

arum healdan, oþ ðæt eft byreð

ofer lagustreamas leofne mannan

wudu wundenhals to Wedermearce,

godfremmendra swylcum gifeþe bið

þæt þone hilderæs hal gedigeð.' (286–300)

[The sentinel … spoke …: '… I accept that this is a party of men loyal to the ruler of the Scyldings. Proceed, bearing weapons and armour. I shall guide you. I shall also order my warrior-thanes honourably to guard your vessel, your new-tarred boat on the beach, against every enemy, until that timbered ship with its curving prow carries a cherished hero back over the tides of ocean to the Weder-Geatish shore: to such a benefactor it will be granted that he will survive the onslaught of battle unharmed.']

The Coastguard's speech can be taken as a formal judgement/assessment ('Ic þæt gehyre, | þæt þis is hold weorod / frean Scyldinga.') as well as a formal/official permission ('Gewitaþ forð beran / wæpen ond gewædu') and official commitments to guide them ('ic eow wisige.') and to have their ship taken care of ('Swylce ic maguþegnas | mine hate … nacan on sande / arum healdan'). The verb also

introduces Wulfgar's speech which is the last of the dialogue with Beowulf:

> Wulfgar maþelode …
>
> 'Ic þæs wine Deniga,
> frean Scildinga frinan wille,
> beaga bryttan, swa þu bena eart,
> þeoden mærne, ymb þinne sið,
> ond þe þa ondsware ædre gecyðan
> ðe me se goda agifan þenceð.' (348–55)
>
> [Wulfgar spoke out …: 'I will consult the friend of the Danes, the ruler of the Scyldings and giver of rings, the famed prince, in this matter concerning your enterprise, just as you, as supplicant, have requested, and I will make the answer quickly known to you, which the worthy man sees fit to give me.']

This can also be considered as an official commitment to convey their message to the king and bring his answer back swiftly as Hrothgar's herald. Both speeches by the Coastguard and Wulfgar certainly have an influence on advancing the narrative by advancing the mission of the Geats. McConchie labels the Coastguard's speech as 'material / courtesy' and Wulfgar's as 'reply option / courtesy'.[27] I will regard them as the same type as regards their narrative function, though the herald has no authority to permit them to enter the hall.

The ensuing conversation between Wulfgar and the king are both introduced by 'maþelode'. Although Wulfgar tells the Geats that he 'frinan wille' (351b), his consultation with the king itself is not introduced by 'frægn' and in fact his speech contains no direct question; he urges the king to grant their supplication: 'No ðu him

[27] McConchie, p. 66.

wearne geteoh / ðinra gegncwida, | glædman Hroðgar.' [do not deny them the substance of your conversation, gracious Hrothgar.] (366b–67). The verb 'frægn' would not be very suitable to the content. Wulfgar may use conventional expressions on such occasions, observing a formal procedure by saying to the Geats that he will 'frinan' Hrothgar if he would allow them to enter the hall. What he actually does, however, is to give advice to the king according to his own judgement on the Geats, who carry splendid arms and armour. His conduct accords with the description of him: 'wæs his modsefa | manegum gecyðed, / wig ond wisdom' ['his courageous temperament, martial prowess and wisdom were familiar to many'] (349–50a). This also reveals the relationship between the king and his thanes: Hrothgar is wise and respected but not tyrannical, and his warriors can give him advice. In reply to the herald, Hrothgar says that he knows Beowulf very well – not only himself ('Ic hine cuðe | cnihtwesende' ['I knew him when he was a boy']: 372), but also his father and his extraordinary strength ('he þritiges / manna mægencræft | on his mundgripe / heaþorof hæbbe') ['he, a renowned soldier in combat, has the potent strength of thirty men in his hand-grip']: 379b–81a). Even before meeting them, the king rightly guesses the purpose of the Geats' visit and urges the herald to bring them in:

> 'Beo ðu on ofeste, hat in gan
> seon sibbegedriht samod ætgædere;
> gesaga him eac wordum, þæt hie sint wilcuman
> Deniga leodum.' (386–89a)

['Be quick; summon this company of kinsmen to enter, all of them together, to see me, and also say to them explicitly that they are welcomed by the Danish people.']

This is a formal command from the king Hrothgar, who believes that Beowulf's intention to come to see him is not personal but for the entire Danes. Apart from the royal permission for the Geats, his speech contains much new information about Beowulf; the king tells us about the hero's past, that is, his former visit to the king as a child and his strong hand-grip which might match the strength of Grendel, who has snatched thirty thanes in his first raid on Heorot (122b–23a).

The verb 'maþelode' is predominately used to introduce speeches made in Heorot, where undoubtedly many people are present; those speeches can be labelled as public without further argument. Both the greeting of Beowulf to Hrothgar and the king's response are introduced by the *inquit*. Made in the royal court, those speeches are naturally formal and ceremonial. Beowulf, who has informed the Danish officials of the rough purpose of his visit, reveals his intention to fight alone with Grendel without armour and arms for the first time:

'… ond nu wið Grendel sceal,
wið þam aglæcan ana gehegan
ðing wið þyrse.
…
ic þæt þonne forhicge …
þæt ic sweord bere oþðe sidne scyld,
geolorand to guþe, ac ic mid grape sceal
fon wið feonde ond ymb feorh sacan,
lað wið laþum …' (424b–40)

['… and now, alone, I must settle the affair with that giant, the monster Grendel … then … I shall disdain to carry a sword or broad shield, a yellow targe, into the encounter; but rather by wrestling shall I tackle the adversary

and fight for life, foe against foe.']

He asks the king to send his mail-coat to Hygelac if he is defeated by Grendel (452–54a). His references to his arms and armour gets more specific towards the end of his speech: 'beaduscruda betst' [the best of battle-garments] (453a), 'hrægla selest' [a most excellent mail-coat] (454a), 'Hrædlan laf' [an heirloom from Hrethel] (454b), 'Welandes geweorc' [the work of Weland] (455a). The descriptive references to his armour are linked back to the introduction to his speech:

> Beowulf maðelode; on him byrne scan,
> searonet seowed smiþes orþancum (405–06)
> [Beowulf spoke out – on him the mail-coat shone, an intricate mesh linked together by the ingenious arts of the smith]

This also shows that the poet paid much attention to how to introduce a speech and that introductory passages are closely related to the following speeches. Hrothgar's speech gives a more detailed account of his relationship with Beowulf's father Ecgtheow, which he has mentioned briefly in replying to Wulfgar (459–72). Hrothgar once settled a feud for Ecgtheow, who sought refuge with him. This episode serves to make more sense of Beowulf's decision to help Hrothgar, reinforcing Beowulf's image as a man of loyalty.[28] The king also gives new information: Danish warriors have failed to fulfil the pledges to defeat Grendel they have made at the mead-bench (480–88). At the end of his speech, the king

[28] Bonjour considers that the king mentions this episode to save the face of the Danes if he accepts Beowulf's offer (*Digressions*, pp. 15–16). Though such psychological interpretation is interesting, I think that the poet makes use of direct speech to inform us of more about the hero's background (i.e., the relationship between Beowulf's father and Hrothgar).

invites Beowulf to the feast (‘Site nu to symle’ [‘Now, sit down to the feast’]: 489a), which moves the narrative forward, but Hrothgar does not give an explicit response to Beowulf’s decision to fight with Grendel alone in his hall.

2. At the welcoming feast in Heorot

After the formal greetings exchanged by the king and Beowulf, a welcoming feast starts, with drinks distributed and with the scop singing (494b–97a). Then Unferth, being envious of Beowulf’s prowess, makes use of the situation and his position to try to degrade him. ‘Maþelode’ introduces the exchange between Unferth and Beowulf. This is the first instance of the one-line ‘maþelode’ formula ‘Beowulf maþelode, | bearn Ecgþeowes’, which is used nine times. We have already been well informed as to the identity of the hero, so the poet would not have needed to add more to the *inquit*. The exchange is apparently public, made in the presence of ‘duguð unlytel | Dena ond Wedera’ [a great host of the nobility of the Danes and Geats] (498). The two speakers are not seated in close proximity: Unferth sits at the feet of the king, while Beowulf sits among his Geatish companions.

Carol J. Clover has shown that the structure of their speeches is similar to that of a Germanic flyting, or verbal duelling.[29] Clover considers that Hrothgar does not reprimand Unferth because it is one of Unferth’s duties to challenge the guest. This kind of hostile exchanges with a foreign visitor at a feast commonly appears elsewhere. The dispute between Odysseus and Euryalus in Book 8 in the *Odyssey*, for example, has often been referred to as an analogue.[30] Odysseus, cast

[29] Carol J. Clover, ‘The Germanic Context of the Unferth Episode’, *Speculum,* 55 (1980), 444–68. For former studies with reference to Old Norse flyting, see Fulf, Bjork, and Niles, footnote 1 in Commentary, p.148.
[30] See, for example, Lord, *Epic Singers*, pp. 133–39; Edward B. Irving Jr., *A Reading of ‘Beowulf’* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 67–68; Parks, *Verbal Dueling*, pp. 72–77.

ashore on the land of the Phaeacians, is welcomed by the king Alcinous. In the contest to entertain the unfortunate guest, a Phaeacian, Euryalus taunts Odysseus, saying that he is not an athlete, when he hears Odysseus reject the suggestion made by Laodamas, son of Alcinous, that he should join them (8. 158–64). After Odysseus shows his excellent skills of throwing a discus, Alcinous reprimands the youth for his rudeness. Edward B. Irving Jr. says of the role of this episode that Odysseus 'is required to give evidence of civilized behavior; yet at a certain point it becomes necessary for him to manifest his *furor heroicus* without actually attacking his hosts directly.'[31] Likewise, Unferth's speech seems to serve as 'the necessary insult', as Irving calls it, to reveal an epic hero's powers.[32] Since, as Robinson says, Unferth 'seems to be a blustering, mean-spirited coward who does not enjoy the respect of his comrades and who seeks to bolster his self-esteem by decrying Beowulf's past performance and present qualifications', I do not think that Unferth behaves with the king's approval.[33] He makes use of the occasion and his position: he speaks as if he threw doubt on Beowulf's strength as an important member of the king's thanes, for he has a position with an official title ('þyle' [spokesman]: 1165)[34] and, as Orchard points out, 'he appears to have played a significant (if perhaps not very honourable) role in the Danish succession', taking account of his lineage and ownership of the fine sword Hrunting.[35] Jealous as Unferth is, it may still be necessary for the poet to present him as a thane who plays an important role in Hrothgar's court, as

[31] Irving, *A Reading*, p. 67.
[32] Irving, *A Reading*, p. 68. Brodeur also says that Unferth's speech 'gave Beowulf a priceless opportunity to establish beyond question his superlative strength and valor, and his ability to defend Heorot': *Art*, p. 146.
[33] Fred C. Robinson, 'Elements of the Marvellous in the Characterization of Beowulf: A Reconsideration of the Textual Evidence', in *Beowulf: Basic Readings*, ed. by Peter S. Baker (London: Garland, 1995), pp. 79–96 (p.90).
[34] Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, however, say that the meaning of this word referring to Unferth 'cannot be determined with certainty' (pp. 150–51).
[35] Orchard, *Companion*, p. 248.

Bonjour says: 'Had Unferth been reduced to a mere swashbuckler, Beowulf's superiority over him would not have meant so much as it actually does, nor would have the lending of the sword.'[36]

Beowulf denies that he and Breca were competing in the swimming exploit and Breca defeated him, but he admits that they vowed that they would risk their lives in the ocean:

> Wit þæt gecwædon cnihtwesende
> ond gebeotedon — wæron begen þa git
> on geogoðfeore — þæt wit on garsecg ut
> aldrum neðdon, ond þæt geæfndon swa. (535–38)
>
> [As boys we two would declare and vow – we were both still in our youth – that we would risk our lives out upon the icy ocean, and we did that.]

What he wants to assert here seems the fact that he acted according to his vow. Now that he is going to risk his life again by fighting against a monster, the fact that he has kept his pledge would not be insignificant. He then talks about his fight with sea-monsters, which takes up a large part of his speech. Orchard says: 'The whole of this section of the narrative appears to be an elaboration of Beowulf's earlier claim to Hrothgar that he had slain "sea-monsters by night"'.[37] Beowulf must still be very young, given that he is sitting by the king's sons among the 'geogoð' [young warriors] (1190) at the celebration of his defeat against Grendel (1188b–91) – not at this feast.[38]

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[36] Bonjour, *Digressions*, p. 19. Though Brodeur also thinks that Unferth plays an important role as a spokesman, he opposes Bonjuor's interpretation of Unferth as 'the first and foremost fighter', saying that '[t]he allegation that Unferth's unwillingness to face Grendel, or Grendel's dam, does not reflect on his valor': *Art*, p. 155.

[37] Orchard, *Companion*, p. 251.

[38] Burrow states: 'He [Beowulf] is, as he tells Unferth, no longer the lad who swam with Breca. Yet he is still at this stage of the poem young: Wealhtheow him as "hyse" or young man, and Hrothgar calls him "geong" (ll. 1217,1843)': *The Ages of Man: A Study*

Unferth's challenge provides a perfect opportunity to introduce Beowulf's former exploits without his appearing to be too self-assertive, while he is seemingly dealing with Unferth's verbal attack. In addition, this speech reveals another aspect of Beowulf: maturity in speech. The dispute between Unferth and Beowulf thus serves to tell us more about the hero himself as well as his past.

When Beowulf receives a cup from the queen Wealhtheow, he delivers a speech which is introduced by the second instance of the one-line 'maþelode' formula:

> Beowulf maþelode, bearn Ecgþeowes:
> 'Ic þæt hogode, þa ic on holm gestah,
> sæbat gesæt mid minra secga gedriht,
> þæt ic anunga eowra leoda
> willan geworhte oþðe on wæl crunge
> feondgrapum fæst. Ic gefremman sceal
> eorlic ellen, oþðe endedæg
> on þisse meoduhealle minne gebidan.' (631–38)
>
> [Beowulf, Ecgtheow's son, spoke out: 'I resolved, as I put to sea and manned the ocean-going boat with a company of my men, that I should either accomplish totally the will of your people or else die in the place of battle, held fast in the enemy's clutches. I shall perform a deed of courage befitting a noble warrior, or else within this mead-hall live my last day.']

This is his formal pledge to fight until either Grendel or he will die, described as 'gilpcwide' [boasting speech] (640). Dwight Conquergood says of the important function of boasting in the Anglo-Saxon society that 'boasts were understood to be

in Medieval Writing and Thought (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), p. 126.

serious utterances with personal, social, legal, and political consequences'. [39] Barbara Nolan and Morton W. Bloomfield also state: 'The drinking and the heightened spirits of the warriors provide the ideal setting for such a public utterance, a social situation which would no doubt have had special significance for Beowulf and the poet's audience.'[40] It is therefore appropriate that the speech is introduced by 'maþelode'. Moreover, the order of the hero's formal speeches made at the feast works effectively. First, he declares that he will fight alone without arms and armour when he greets Hrothgar, and then he provides evidence that he is capable of dealing with fierce monsters when he replies to Unferth, and finally he makes it clear that he intends to risk his life. Spoken after the Breca episode in which he insists that he has fulfilled his vow, his words become more persuasive and convincing.

3. After the fight with Grendel and at the celebration of Beowulf's victory

The next morning after the fight with Grendel, many Danes come to Heorot to look at Grendel's arm. Hrothgar also comes with his retainers. The king and Beowulf again each make a speech introduced by 'maþelode'. The situation is undoubtedly public, with many people present. Hrothgar starts his speech with thanking God: 'Ðisse ansyne | alwealdan þanc / lungre gelimpe' ['For this sight let thanksgiving to the Ruler of all forthwith take place'] (928–29a). Hrothgar also says to Beowulf that he 'will embrace him as a son' and praises Beowulf's deed. This is formal praise from a king. Beowulf's speech follows immediately, but it is not a direct reply to the king. Beowulf gives a report of the battle; he tells how the fight went and how it did not

[39] Dwight Conquergood, 'Boasting in Anglo-Saxon England: Performance and the Heroic Ethos', *Literature and Performance*, 1 (1981), 24–35 (p. 26).
[40] Barbara Nolan and Morton W. Bloomfield, '"Bēotword", "Gilpcwidas", and the "Gilphlæden" Scop of "Beowulf"', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 79 (1980), 499–516, (p. 506).

end quite as he would have wished:

Uþe ic swiþor
þæt ðu hine selfne geseon moste,
feond on frætewum fylwerigne. (960b–62)

[I should rather have wished that you could have seen the enemy himself in his trappings, exhausted and dying.]

His speech can be regarded as an official report from the person who has been engaged in the battle.

Wealhtheow delivers two speeches; one is not introduced by 'maþelode' (1169–87) and the other is (1216–31).[41] The former is more likely to address Hrothgar himself (see below), while the latter has a more public nature: bestowing treasure on a warrior as well as passing a cup is an important ceremony a queen carries out:[42]

'Bruc ðisses beages, Beowulf leofa,
hyse, mid hæle, ond þisses hrægles neot,
þeo[d]gestreona, ond geþeoh tela,
cen þec mid cræfte, ond þyssum cnyhtum wes
lara liðe. Ic þe þæs lean geman …' (1216–20)

['Enjoy in good fortune, Beowulf, beloved young warrior, this torque, and make use of this cloak, a treasure from the communal hoard, and may prosperity rightly be yours. Distinguish yourself by your strength, and be kindly disposed

[41] Rissanen ascribes the difference to publicness: 'Wealhþeow here intends her speech to be even more publicly observed than her words to Hroþgar': '*Maþelian* in Old English Poetry', p. 164.
[42] See *Maxim I* 81–92: Mitchell and Robinson, pp. 216–17.

towards these boys in giving them good counsels. I shall keep your reward for this in mind …']

Wealhtheow speaks as queen. In addition, her speech is a diplomatically concealed plea; while conducting a traditional ceremony of giving gifts, she asks Beowulf to take care of her children. She is really concerned about the future of her children and their relationship with their cousin, Hrothulf (see below Chapter 5). It is noteworthy that this speech also plays a part in making Beowulf's farewell greeting more natural, in which the hero mentions the elder son Hrethric, showing his consideration for him (1836–38a).

4. Before and after the fight with Grendel's mother

The next night, Grendel's mother comes to Heorot to revenge her son and kills a thane of Hrothgar. Having been called for the next morning, Beowulf asks the king if the night had passed agreeably. This is not an ordinary morning greeting, and Beowulf would at least have perceived that something unusual had happened (see Chapter 1). Hrothgar's answer to Beowulf is introduced by 'maþelode' (1322–82), not by the verb of answering:

Hroðgar maþelode, helm Scyldinga:
'Ne frin þu æfter sælum! Sorh is geniwod
Denigea leodum: dead is Æschere,
Yrmenlafes yldra broþor,
min runwita ond min rædbora,
eaxlgestealla ðonne we on orlege
hafelan weredon, þonne hniton feþan,

eoferas cnysedan. Swy(lc) scolde eorl wesan,

[æþeling] ærgod, swylc Æschere wæs …' (1321–29)

[Hrothgar spoke, protector of the Scyldings: 'Do not ask after matters of weal: woe has come afresh upon the Danish people. Æschere is dead, Yrmenlaf's elder brother, my privy adviser and my counsellor, a comrade at my shoulder when we defended our heads in the fray, when infantry-men clashed and crushed the boar-crested helms. Such ought an earl to be, a noble man proved worthy of old, such as Æschere was …']

McConchie sees the speech by the king as expressing 'the personal anguish of the speaker and the blunt rejection of the formality with which Beowulf had begun the exchange'.[43] It is not impossible, at the same time, to see this speech as a formal lament by the king, rather than just a personal response to the death of his beloved thane; the king mentions his name and kinship, his role in his court and his prowess in battle. Most of his speech is in fact a detailed account of Grendel's mother and her lair, such information that a wise king would be able to provide (1330–75). Beowulf's response to Hrothgar's speech is also introduced by 'maþelode' (1384–96). He encourages the king:

Beowulf maþelode, bearn Ecgþeowes:

'Ne sorga, snotor guma. Selre bið æghwæm

þæt he his freond wrece þonne he fela murne ...' (1383–85)

[Beowulf, son of Ecgtheow, spoke: 'Do not, as a man of reason, give yourself up to grief. It is a finer thing in any man that he should avenge his friend than that he should unduly mourn.]

[43] McConchie, p.62.

His speech starts with a negative imperative, just as Hrothgar's does. He promises to undertake the fight with Grendel's mother: 'Ic hit þe gehate' [I promise you this] (1392a). His speech is taken as his second formal promise and here too we are thus dealing with a commitment publicly given. Shortly before plunging into the mere where Grendel's mother lives, he makes another formal pledge in front of an assembly of the Danes and his own companions, as he has done before the fight with Grendel; he again asks the king to take care of his companions and pass his treasure to Hygelac, if he should be defeated (1474–91). At the end of his speech, he declares: 'ic me mid Hruntinge / dom gewyrce, | oþðe mec deað nimeð.' [With Hrunting I shall achieve renown, or else death will carry me off] (1490b–91). He vows to fight at the risk of his life.

After having defeated Grendel's mother, Beowulf speaks in front of the Danes to show his 'sælac' [sea-booties] (1652a), the head of Grendel and the hilt of a giant-made sword (1652–54). He recounts his fight with the monster (1655–68a), as he has done after the fight with Grendel, and gives the Danes his assurance that they will never again suffer from Grendel and his mother (1671–76). This speech can be regarded as a formal report from a person who has been engaged in the deed.

Looking at the ancient hilt of the sword Beowulf has brought back, Hrothgar makes a long speech (1700–84), which is often referred to as his 'sermon'. After praising Beowulf, he tells him not to become like Heremod, whose arrogance troubled his people. Hrothgar gives Beowulf, potential candidate for the Geatish throne, formal advice as an old and wise king: 'ic þis gid be þe / awræc wintrum frod' [For your sake I have told this tale, as one grown wise with the years] (1723b–24a). Orchard says that his sermon (i.e., rulers who are overconfident with their power and strength will never prosper forever and everything is in God's will) is inspired

by the engraving on the hilt which he is looking at:[44]

On ðæm wæs or writen
fyrngewinnes; syðþan flod ofsloh,
gifen geotende giganta cyn,
frecne geferdon; þæt wæs fremde þeod
ecean dryhtne; him þæs endelean
þurh wæteres wylm waldend sealde. (1688b–93)

[On it was engraved the beginning of the age-old war; subsequently, the Flood, an overwhelming deluge, killed the race of giants – they had behaved wickedly. It was a people alienated from the eternal Lord; because of this the Ruler gave them final payment in the rising of the water.]

This description of the hilt, placed between two *inquits* ('Hroðgar maðelode' [Hrothgar spoke forth] (1687a) and 'Ða se wisa spræc / sunu Healfdenes' [So the wise son of Healfdene spoke] (1698b–99a)), is a part of the longest introductory passage before direct speech in the poem. This is another example that shows how the introduction to direct speech in this poem is closely related to the content of the following speech.

Before leaving Denmark, Beowulf and Hrothgar exchange farewell speeches.[45] Beowulf expresses a wish to leave and gives thanks for the hospitality they have received:

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[44] Orchard, *Companion*, pp. 158–59. See also Robinson *Appositive Style*, p. 33: 'The poet shows Hrothgar gazing long at the sword hilt with the biblical account of the Deluge engraved upon it. Poet and audience know exactly what the flood that slew the giant race was and whence it came, but Hrothgar does not.'

[45] Shippey analyses these speeches focusing on the use of maxims: 'Maxims in Old English Narrative: Literary Art or Traditional Wisdom?', in *Oral Tradition, Literary Tradition: A Symposium*, ed. by Hans Bekker-Nielsen and others (Odense: Odense University Press, 1977), pp. 28–46 (pp. 31–33).

‘Nu we sæliðend secgan wyllað,
feorran cumene þæt we fundiaþ
Higelac secan. Wæron her tela,
willum bewenede; þu us wel dohtest …’ (1818–21)

[‘We seafarers, having journeyed from afar, wish to say now that we are setting out to return to Hygelac. We have been well and willingly looked after here; you have been abundantly kind to us ...’]

Then here, too, he makes commitments to promise to come to the aid of the king if he needs it and give an assurance of a welcome if his son Hrethric visits the land of the Geats (1822–39). Impressed by his words, Hrothgar replies:

‘Þe þa wordcwydas wigtig drihten
on sefan sende; ne hyrde ic snotorlicor
on swa geongum feore guman þingian…’ (1841–43)

[These utterances the wise Lord sent into your mind. I have not heard a man speak more discerningly at so young an age.]

This is the last speech by Hrothgar in the poem and it is introduced by the one-line *inquit* formula ‘Hroðgar maþelode | him on ondsware’ [Hrothgar spoke forth in reply to him] (1840) – not by his usual ‘maþelode’ formula (‘Hroðgar maþelode, | helm Scyldinga’). This might show how Beowulf’s prudent words have amazed the old king; he could have started more conventional words of parting, but instead the king starts his speech by commenting on what Beowulf has just said. Hrothgar’s remark also affirms that Beowulf is not only strong but wise for his age. Then the king too

promises that there shall be a mutual peace between the Danes and the Geats as long as he lives (1855–65).[46] Their parting words are exchanges of diplomatic promises between the two countries.

5. At Hygelac's court after Beowulf has returned home

Hygelac's request to hear about Beowulf's adventures in Denmark (1987–98) may not be very formal (see above), but Beowulf's response which is introduced by 'maþelode' can be seen as a formal report from a thane of the king. While recounting his experiences in Denmark (2009b–2143), he expresses his views on the outcome of Hrothgar's daughter Freawaru's marriage for the purpose of ending a feud between the Danes and the Heathobards, which shows his insight into vengeful human nature (2024b–69a). According to Brodeur, 'Beowulf is not predicting, but merely expressing his opinion of the probable outcome'. He explains:

> Beowulf has seen Freawaru at Heorot, and has been told of her betrothal to Ingeld. This is news of political interest to Hygelac. Since Beowulf has pledged Geatish aid to Hrothgar against any foe (lines 1826–35), the success or failure of Hrothgar's design to end the feud with Heaobards is a matter of consequence to the Geats; if the Danes should be faced with renewed war, the Geats might find themselves involved in it.[47]

Brodeur considers that the story of Ingeld is used 'to illustrate Beowulf's wisdom and political insight'.[48] If his interpretation is right, this episode can be seen as an

[46] Robinson says that 'Beowulf's carefully phrased advice and veiled assurances prompt Hrothgar to sudden and enthusiastic praise of his wisdom and his skill at speech: *Appositive Style*, p. 5.
[47] Brodeur, *Art*, pp. 177–78.
[48] Brodeur, *Art*, p. 178.

elaboration of the hero's wisdom that Hrothgar has perceived in his parting words.[49] It thus serves to show that Beowulf also has qualities of statesmanship. At the end of his speech, he mentions the treasures that he has been given: 'ða ic ðe, beorncyning, | bringan wylle, / estum geywan' [These, warrior-king, I want to bring and present to you as loving gifts] (2148–49a). Before finishing his speech, he orders the treasures to be brought in. The narrative briefly intervenes:

> Het ða in beran eaforheafodsegn,
> heaðosteapne helm, hare byrnan,
> guðsweord geatolic, gyd æfter wræc (2152–54)
>
> [So he commanded the boar to be carried in, the high standard, the helmet towering in battle, the grey mail-coat and the splendid war-sword; then he completed his story]

Beowulf presents his splendid treasures to his king rather dramatically; he reserves them until he mentions them. The concluding speech, in which he explains the origin of the treasures to his king, should be regarded as part of the formal speech (see Chapters 1 and 3).

6. Beowulf in his old age

Before his fight with the dragon, Beowulf makes a sequence of speeches in front of his comrades ('þenden hælo abead | heorðgeneatum' [while he … bade farewell to his household companions]: 2418). The first and second speeches (2426–2509 and 2511b–15) are introduced by 'maþelode' and the last speech is introduced by

[49] Some scholars see this episode as prophetic, which others, including Brodeur, reject. See Brodeur, *Art*, pp. 159–60.

'gegrette', an unusual verb as an *inquit*. This sequence of speeches – especially the first two – occasions the hero's last formal boasts before battle. The first speech begins:

> 'Fela ic on giogoðe guðræsa genæs,
> orleghwila; ic þæt eall gemon …' (2426–27)
> ['Many warfaring forays and times of strife I survived in my youth: I remember it all …']

He looks back on his long life, first mentioning how his grandfather, King Hrethel, received him when he was seven years old and treated him as his own son (2428–34). Then he tells how Haethcyn inadvertently killed his older brother Herebeald, which devastated their father Hrethel (2435–43). The king's agony is compared with that of an old father whose son has been hanged: both fathers have to bear their sadness, unable to avenge the deaths of their sons (2444–71).[50] Then Beowulf moves on to tell how Haethcyn fell in war (2472–89) and then how he repaid his lord Hygelac, fighting for him with his hand and sword (2490–2508a). Beowulf does not mention the death of Hygelac, which has already been recorded in the narrative voice (2354b–59a). At the end of the speech, he declares: 'Nu sceall billes ecg, / hond ond heard sweord, | ymb hord wigan' ['Now blade's edge, hand and tough sword, will have to fight for the hoard'] (2508b–09).

It is true that he does not seem to address his comrades. In fact, some critics see this speech as monologue rather than a public speech. Bjork states that the *inquit*

[50] See Dorothy Whitelock, 'Beowulf 2444–2471', *Medium Ævum*, 8 (1939), 198–204. Hrethel could not take vengeance, since he was the father of both the slain and the slayer; Anglo-Saxon law forbade people to take vengeance for an executed criminal.

'maþelode' used in Part 2 'works at odds with the monologues of the speakers'.[51] De Looze considers that 'Beowulf sits down to think aloud', 'seek[ing] in past events an objective correlative to his present predicament' to decide whether he should take action or not.[52] Linda Georgianna finds this speech 'abrupt, confusing and disorienting', saying it 'consists of a series of dissociated memories juxtaposed without comment'. She thinks that 'the poet seems intent on disengaging his audience from the forward movement of the heroic story in order to suggest the limit of heroic action'.[53]

It is possible, however, that this sequence of speeches can still be seen as a formal statement from a king. I think that the first speech, in which Beowulf seems to meditate on his youth, has double purpose: the obvious one is to let the hero deliver his formal boast before his last fight and the other to fill the gap of the history of the Geatish dynasty. For a warrior to recall his past prowess plays an important part in making a formal commitment, as Conquergood says: 'Past deeds function within a boast as both signposts and springboards for ever more daring feats of valor.'[54] The latter part of the speech (i.e., Beowulf's exploits in Hygelac's last battle (2490–2508a)) clearly serves this purpose. Although the former part may sound rather digressive, the poet seems to want the hero to talk about what has not been explained yet: how Hygelac, who is the third son of Hrethel, becomes king; the poet has mentioned in the narrated part only how Beowulf becomes king after Hygelac died (2354b–59a). But the poet does not merely use direct speech to give new information; the tragic episode concerning Herebeald's accidental death provides a good

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[51] Bjork, 'Speech as Gift', p. 1001.
[52] Laurence N. de Looze, 'Frame Narratives and Fictionalization: Beowulf as Narrator', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 26 (1984), 145-56, (pp. 148–49).
[53] Linda Georgianna, 'King Hrethel's Sorrow & the Limits of Heroic Action in *Beowulf*', *Speculum*, 62 (1987), 829–50. See also Joseph Harris, 'Beowulf's Last Words', *Speculum,* 67 (1992), 1–32. He analyses the speech in relation to the death-song tradition of Old Norse texts.
[54] Conquergood, p.28.

comparison between the old king Hrethel and Beowulf himself. It is impossible for Hrethel to take revenge for his dead son, while it is possible for Beowulf take revenge on the deadly dragon for his people. Irving says: 'The will to act must be defined by its opposite, the world without action.'[55] The Old Father's lament (2444–62b) serves to emphasize Hrethel's sorrow as a contrast, just as the episode of Sigemund is used to draw a parallel portrait of Beowulf (875–900) and the following one of Heremod draws a contrast (901–15). This digression also functions to justify Beowulf's decision to fight against the dragon; it is better for him to avenge its malicious deed, however old he is, than to leave it unavenged, just as he himself says to Hrothgar in his youth: 'Selre bið æghwæm / þæt he his freond wrece | þonne he fela murne' [It is a finer thing in any man that he should avenge his friend than that he should unduly mourn] (1384b–85). The hero does not review his own personal life here. He talks about the Geatish dynasty, as Brodeur states: 'In this speech the poet lets his hero establish his place in the royal dynasty, and reveal his devotion to his kinsmen.'[56] Before the speeches, the poet tells us that Beowulf' death is near:

Him wæs geomor sefa,
wæfre ond wælfus, wyrd ungemete neah,
se ðone gomelan gretan sceolde,
secean sawle hord, sundur gedælan
lif wið lice; no þon lange wæs
feorh æþelinges flæsce bewunden. (2419b–24)

[His spirit was melancholy, restless, prepared for death, and that eventuality was immeasurably close, which was to come upon the old man, seek the

[55] Irving, *A Reading*, p. 227.
[56] Brodeur, *Art*, p. 84.

treasure-store of his soul and part asunder life from body; not for long after that was the prince's life clothed in flesh.]

He now has a strong presentiment of his approaching death; it seems quite appropriate for the old king to 'establish his place' in the dynasty formally before his death.

The second speech is unmistakably a formal pledge or commitment before battle, which he in all cases gives, as the introduction to the speech says: 'beotwordum spræc / niehstan siðe' [uttered pledge-plighting words for the last time] (2510b–11a). He declares that he will seek conflict ('fæhðe secan': 2513b) and accomplish glory ('mærð*u* fremman': 2514a). In the third speech (2518b–37), which is not introduced by 'maþelode', Beowulf more specifically addresses his comrades: 'Gegrette ða | gumena gehwylcne' [Then he greeted each of men] (2516). He tells them how he intends to fight the dragon, as he has also done before fighting with Grendel (677–87). The poet might have separated the third speech from the second to mark the change of his tone (see Chapter 1).

The first speech by Wiglaf, a young retainer and kinsman of Beowulf, is introduced by the *inquit* 'maþelode'. This speech is also a formal pledge or commitment before battle. He speaks to his comrades when he sees his king struggling against the furious dragon:

Wiglaf maðelode, wordrihta fela
sægde gesiðum – him wæs sefa geomor:
'Ic ðæt mæl geman, þær we medu þegun,
þonne we geheton ussum hlaforde
in biorsele, ðe us ðas beagas geaf,

þæt we him ða guðgetawa gyldan woldon

gif him þyslicu þearf gelumpe,

helmas ond heard sweord …' (2631–38a)

[Wiglaf spoke out and voiced many truthful remarks to his companions; his spirit was melancholy: 'I remember the time when, as we drank mead there in the beer-hall, we would promise our lord, who gave us these treasures, that we would repay him for these battle-accoutrements, the helmets and the tough swords, if a need such as this should befall him ...']

Here he talks as a thane of the king, as Irving points out: 'From the first, Wiglaf placed himself solidly in the heroic community of the comitatus'.[57] It is noteworthy that Wiglaf starts his speech by using the same verb 'geman' [remembered] (2633a) as Beowulf start his final series of speeches by remembering his past ('ic þæt eall gemon': 2427b). Ad Putter points out that the word 'gemunan' in Old English epic poetry is not a verb of 'mental process' but a verb of action; in uttering the word 'remember', the speaker commits to doing something that honours past deeds.[58] Wiglaf, urging his companions to help their king ('wutun gongan to, / helpan hildfruman' [Let us go to him and help our war-leader]: 2648b–49a), declares his own decision:

'… God wat on mec

þæt me is micle leofre þæt minne lichaman

mid minne goldgyfan gled fæðmie …' (2650b–52)

[57] Irving, *A Reading*, p. 160. He also says that the speech 'as a whole is entirely conventional', analogous to 'the beots in the latter part of *The Battle of Maldon*'.
[58] Ad Putter, 'The Hero 'Remembers': The Verb *Gemunan* in *Beowulf* and *The Battle of Maldon*', forthcoming in confidential festschrift.

['… As for me, God knows that it is much more agreeable to me that smouldering fire should engulf my body alongside my gold-giving lord …']

Wiglaf reaches this decision by remembering: he is ready to die with his lord. The speech thus functions as his formal pledge. His words also testify that Beowulf has been a generous lord to his thanes, distributing treasures at the mead-bench.

After having defeated the dragon, the dying Beowulf gives another speech introduced by 'maþelode' (2729–51). As I have already pointed out in Chapter 1, Beowulf talks as a king though he is accompanied only by Wiglaf; his speech is not addressed personally to his faithful thane. In the speech before the fight (2426–2509), he reviews his life before he becomes king; this time, he looks back on his life as a king. In the latter part of the speech, he asks Wiglaf to bring some of the treasures he has earned so that he can leave this world peacefully (2743b–51). He does not ask this for his personal satisfaction but still talks as a king who is responsible for his people, gaining treasures to distribute and be used for the benefit of his nation, which he clearly mentions in his next speech (2799–81).[59]

The introductory passage to the last series of the speeches by the hero (2794–2808, 2813–16) seems to be defective, with the half-line 2792b apparently missing. Since 'maþelode' is never used in the b-verse, it is unlikely that the missing b-verse contained the *inquit*. Nevertheless, Beowulf's last speech (i.e., thanksgiving to God and instructions on the building of his barrow) presents such features as the other speeches introduced by 'maþelode' have. Although the periphrasis 'wordes ord breosthord þurhbræc' (2791b–92a) adequately serves as an *inquit*, this introduction

[59] Baker states that 'it is a kingly duty to maintain the national hoard of treasure and honour; there is no distinction to be made between the king's personal wealth and the national treasury': *Honour, Exchange and Violence in 'Beowulf'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 215.

to direct speech is still very atypical in the poem. It is, therefore, not impossible that more than a half-line has been omitted here and the introductory passage contained the 'maþelode' formula with some reference to the treasures that Wiglaf shows him. Furthermore, if the speech was originally introduced by 'maþelode' and the speech had an official nature, such as 'Beowulf's last will', as Alfred Bammesberger puts it, the use of plural imperatives in the speech seems less problematic.[60] After giving thanks to God for allowing him to gain treasures for his people, he speaks:

> '… Nu ic on maðma hord mi*n*e bebohte
> frode feorhlege, **fremmað** gena
> leoda þearfe; ne mæg ic her leng wesan.
> **Hatað** heaðomære hlæw gewyrcean
> beorhtne æfter bæle æt brimes nosan …' (2799–2803)
>
> ['… Now that I have traded my old life for a hoard of treasures, you must now fulfil the people's need. I cannot be here any longer. Command men famous as fighters to build a burial mound, a conspicuous one, on the ocean bluff, following the cremation ...']

While the verbs 'fremmað' (2800b) and 'hatað' (2802a) are normally considered to be plural imperatives, as Bradley's translation above shows, those plural forms do not accord with the fact that only Wiglaf is near the hero, and some critics in fact suggest that Beowulf is not addressing Wiglaf alone here. Irving says, for example, that Beowulf is addressing 'the collective nation via the young warrior who will relay the message'.[61] If the speech is regarded as the dying king's formal statement of his will,

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[60] Alfred Bammesberger, 'Beowulf's Last Will', *English Studies*, 77 (1996), 305–10.
[61] Edward B. Irving, Jr., *Rereading 'Beowulf'* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), p. 117. For a brief summary of some solutions offered by

those plural forms do not seem very unnatural, making this a public rather than a private statement in the text.[62] The narrative interrupts the speech briefly before Beowulf finishes his speech:

> Dyde him of healse hring gyldenne
> þioden þristhydig, þegne gesealde,
> geongum garwigan, goldfahne helm,
> beah ond byrnan, het hyne brucan well:
> 'Þu eart endelaf usses cynnes,
> Wægmundinga; ealle wyrd fors*w*eo*þ*
> mine magas to metodsceafte,
> eorlas on elne; ic him æfter sceal.' (2809–16)

[From his neck the intrepid prince took the gold collar and gave it, and his helmet agleam with gold, his ring and his mail-coat to the young spear-wielding warrior, his thane, and charged him to use them well: 'You are the last survivor of our line, the Wægmundings; Providence has lured away all my kinsmen, those earls in their valour, to their appointed destiny. I must follow after them.']

This interruption may function to mark the change of his tone: a change from a formal address to a more personal address to Wiglaf (see Chapter 1).

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critics, see Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, note on 2800b, p. 257.

[62] Bammesberger notes in his article 'Beowulf's Last Will' that those verbs can be present indicative third-person plural forms with the subject unexpressed and proposes the alternative punctuation where the two verbs stand in parallel constructions with the same subject. However, if Beowulf here is considered to be trying to 'relay the message' through Wiglaf, as Irving says, this alternative grammatical interpretation seems unnecessary.

7. After Beowulf's death

The last two speeches introduced by 'maþelode' are made by Wiglaf. Wiglaf starts the first speech (2864–91) by reproaching the comrades he addresses, who have failed to fulfil the promise they made at the mead-bench. He again talks as a thane of the king and makes a public denunciation. He criticizes the cowardly companions by mentioning how the king gave them precious arms and armour (2867–70); he rebukes them in connection with Beowulf's generosity. Then he talks about the battle (2874b–83), as Beowulf gave his own accounts of the fight with the Grendels, which are also introduced by 'maþelode'. In the second speech (3077–3109), Wiglaf recounts the last moment of their king and repeats his will concerning his funeral and barrow:

'… worn eall gespræc
gomol on gehðo ond eowic gretan het,
bæd þæt ge geworhton æfter wines dædum
in bælstede beorh þone hean,
micelne ond mærne …' (3094b–98a)

['… The old man said many things in his pain and told me to greet you and commanded that you should build the high barrow on the place of the pyre, in keeping with his deeds as a friend and lord – great and glorious …']

It is interesting to note that Wiglaf uses the second-person plural pronouns 'eowic' (3095) and 'ge' (3096) here, not the first-person pronouns; this seems to indicate that Wiglaf himself understands the above-mentioned plural verbs 'fremmað' (2800b) and 'hatað' (2802a) as the king's referring to his retainers ('heaðomære' [renowned in battle]: 2802a) collectively. This speech also functions as the formal report of the last moment of their king and his will.

All the speeches introduced by 'mathelode' in *Beowulf* thus can be considered to have formal and public nature. There are a variety of occasions that require formality in a community, especially in such a royal hall as the king Hrothgar holds, and such formal speeches vary according to the social status of a speaker. As a result, the verb can cover many types of speech acts, as we have seen. In *Beowulf*, in addition to such speeches as a courtly society requires, the speeches in which formal commitments or pledges are expressed dominate. Formal speeches are normally given by people of high rank in epic poems. It seems that this is the reason why 'mathelode' is almost always used for the protagonist or relatively prominent figures in the narrative. Furthermore, the speeches introduced by 'mathelode' in this poem are more relevant to the immediate story. They tend to contain new information about the hero, just as they constitute official reports on such battles as they may record, which I will discuss further in relation to the narrative voice in the next chapter.

Before proceeding to the next *inquits*, I wish to point out that the same function the verb 'mathelode' has in *Beowulf* can also be perceivable in the other Old English poems. Outside the epic poem, the use of the *inquit* is infrequent (see Chapter 1). Rissanen briefly deals with the use of the verb in the other Old English poems at the end of his article and concludes that the *inquit* does not '[retain] the basic function it has in *Beowulf*'.[63] In *The Battle of Maldon*, the verb is certainly more likely to be used as one of the common verbs of speech, perhaps for a stylistic purpose; it does not show any distinctive features in *Riddle 38*. If the *inquit* indicates the formal nature of the speech it introduces, however, the verb in the other poems seem to be used in the same fashion as in *Beowulf*. In *Elene*, as I have already mentioned in

[63] Rissanen, '*Maþelian* in Old English Poetry', pp. 168–70.

Chapter 1, the use of this verb is comparable with that in *Beowulf* not only in publicness but also in the status of the speakers within the community: Helena speaks as a delegate of Constantine and Judas as a delegate of the Jews. I think that even the instances in *Genesis*, where the speaker clearly addresses a certain individual, can also be interpreted as formal.[64] In *Genesis*, the *inquit* is used four times for prominent personages: Satan and Adam in *Genesis B*, and Abraham in *Genesis A*. In three of them, the addresser has only one addressee. Satan's speech is perfectly consistent with the original sense of this verb, since he is talking to his followers as their chief (356–441a). But Adam talks to the devil alone who has been sent by Satan. Nevertheless, it is possible to see his speech as a formal refusal: when Adam resolutely declines the devil's temptation (523b–546), he speaks as an obedient child of God, a member of His creations; he speaks mainly about what God has done for him and told him, pointing out the disparity between God's commands and what the snake tells him to do. Similarly, when Abraham addresses his wife Sarah (1824–43) or his son Isaac (2895–96), he seems to be conscious of God as if he invoked Him, as a faithful servant of God. When he is to go to Egypt because of famine in his dwelling place, he orders his wife to tell Egyptians that she is his sister so that they will not kill him. The speech ends:

"… þu him fæste hel
soðan spræce swa þu minum scealt
feore gebeorgan gif me freoðo drihten
on woruldrice, waldend usser,
an, ælmihtig, swa he ær dyde,

[64] I have already discussed some similarities in the use of the verb between *Beowulf* and *Elene*. See Chapter 1.

lengran lifes. se us þas lade sceop

þæt we on egiptum are sceolde

fremena friclan and us fremu secan." (1836b–43)

['… Steadfastly conceal the truth from them, and in this way you will protect my life, if the Lord grants me peace and a longer life in the world-kingdom, our Wielder Almighty, as He did before. He made this path for us, so that we might seek for favour and benefits and look for our advantage among the Egyptians.'][65]

In the Bible, Abraham does not mention God in his speech (Genesis 12:10–13), but the Old English poem makes it clear that Abraham's going down to Egypt is a part of God's design rather than Abraham's own choice.[66] Likewise, when Isaac asks him where the sacrifice is:

Abraham maðelode. hæfde on an gehogod

þæt he gedæde swa hine drihten het:

"Him þæt soðcyning sylfa findeð,

moncynnes weard, swa him gemet þinceð." (2893–96)

[Abraham spoke, pondered on one thing that he would do as the Lord ordered: 'The True-King will find it for himself, the Guard of Mankind, as it seems fitting to him.']

[65] This translation is mine, as Bradley does not translate this part of the poem.

[66] For the sources of *Genesis*, see Allen and Calder, pp. 1–5. See also Louviot, footnote 53, p.216, in which she states that 'Old English poems seem to take care in representing consistently positive protagonists', and in 'morally dubious' episodes in the Bible, such as Abraham's 'passing off his wife as his sister to ensure his own safety', the poet 'always uses very positive epithets to describes Abraham'. The use of the *inquit* may have been one of the poet's schemes to represent him as a faithful figure.

He seems to speak as a faithful servant of God, even if he answers his own son's question. Rissanen sees the use of 'maðelode' here as devoid of 'the condition about public occasion or length and weight of utterance', saying that the *inquit* 'introduces Abraham's short, almost casual, reply to Isaac'.[67] But these speeches are far from 'casual'; they too are highly formal in their announced commitment to duty to obey a lord's commands. I think that it is not impossible to interpret these speeches in *Genesis*, too, as showing formality, especially those by Abraham as formal invocation.

'Cwæð', 'spræc' and 'sægde'

As we have seen in Chapter 1, there are some passages of direct speech introduced by '-cweðan' '-sprecan' and 'secgan'. I wish to make some comments on them, ignoring those occasions on which the two latter are used simply in parallel variation with 'maþelode'. Most speeches in the poem are made in the presence of many people; in this respect, such speeches all have public nature. Therefore, in most cases, the circumstances alone do not indicate any difference between speeches introduced by different verbs of speech. Hence some arguments below have to be based on the contents or nature of speeches, i.e., on whether the speaker means to address an official speech as a member of the community or whether he or she means to speak more personally.

The verb '-cweðan', never used in apposition with 'maþelode' in this poem, seems to introduce speeches which have spontaneous, personal or emotive nature; it is used especially when speakers address a particular individual or group, whether other people are present or not. There are five speeches which are introduced by the verb. The first one is used to introduce the Coastguard's farewell to the Geats when he has guided them towards Heorot:

[67] Rissanen, '*Maþelian* in Old English Poetry', p. 169.

guðbeorna sum

wicg gewende, word æfter **cwæð**:

'Mæl is me to feran; fæder alwalda

mid arstafum eowic gehealde

siða gesunde. Ic to sæ wille,

wið wrað werod wearde healdan.' (314b–19)

[The distinguished warrior turned his horse about and then spoke these words: 'It is time for me to go. May the Father and Ruler of all in his loving-kindness keep you safe in your undertakings. I will go back to the sea, to keep guard against any hostile band.']

Here he is talking to the Geats in a friendlier manner than when he previously talked to them as an ex officio member of Hrothgar's court. These words are not something he is duty-bound to say. This speech also testifies to his fulfilment of the promise he made earlier: 'ic eow wisige' [I shall guide you] (292b). Furthermore, it serves to move the narrative smoothly to the next dialogue between Beowulf and Wulfgar, clearly telling us that the Coastguard has left the Geats before they reach Heorot.

The next speech introduced by '-cweðan' is Hrothgar's greeting to Beowulf before going to bed. The *inquit* formula 'ond þæt word **acwæð**' introduces the speech:

'Næfre ic ænegum men ær alyfde,

siþðan ic hond ond rond hebban mihte,

ðryþærn Dena buton þe nuða.

Hafa nu ond geheald husa selest,

gemyne mærþo, mægenellen cyð,

waca wið wraþum! Ne bið þe wilna gad

gif þu þæt ellenweorc aldre gedigest.' (655–61)

['Never since I could raise hand and shield have I previously entrusted the splendid hall of the Danes to any man except here and now to you. Now have and hold the best of dwellings. Set your mind on glory, manifest your mighty courage, keep watch against foes. There will be no stinting of your wishes, if you survive that act of courage with your life.']

Now the king knows that Beowulf is going to fight alone with Grendel, he is talking specifically to Beowulf, as the introductory passage indicates: '[Ge]grette þa | guma oþerne, / Hroðgar Beowulf, | ond him hæl abead, / winærnes geweald' [Hrothgar saluted Beowulf and wished him success, supremacy over the festive-hall] (652–54b). There is no definite reason why this speech should not be taken as formal, made at the end of the welcoming feast with many people being present: it may be seen as a host's protocol to say something to his guest before leaving the feast. Like the Coastguard's speech above, however, the situation itself does not require him to make an official speech and such words after a feast are different in nature from those uttered when a host and a guest see each other for the first time. It is therefore possible that here the king speaks more informally, showing his personal trust in Beowulf as well as his personal encouragement to him.

The old Heathobard's provocation (2047–56) is introduced by 'cwið' (2041a) and 'ond þæt word acwyð' (2046b). His speech is not public and is clearly addressed to one individual in particular: 'onginneð geomormod | geong(um) cempan / þurh hreðra gehygd | higes cunnian' [Brooding in spirit he sets out to try the young soldier's temper] (2044–45). The speech is almost certainly not intended to be overheard, as the old warrior might be silenced or rebuked as a troublemaker.

The Last Survivor's lament (2247–66) and Wiglaf's exhortation to Beowulf (2663–68) are introduced by the same *inquit* formula 'fea worda cwæð' (2246 and 2662). The Last Survivor's speech cannot be public – no one left to be addressed. It starts with a phrase that suggests he is formally bestowing treasures on the personified Earth: 'Heald þu nu, hruse …' (2247). He continues by explaining his act, pointing to the claim the earth has on them as if he realized he has said something irrational: 'Hwæt, hyt ær on ðe / gode begeaton' [Indeed, good men got it from you in the first place] (2248b–49a). Then he contemplates his present situation, laying bare his desolate feelings, which he emphasizes by listing the things which he had enjoyed before but that he does not have any more. This speech also serves to explain to his audience the origin and details of the treasures that Beowulf attempts to gain for his people.

Wiglaf's speech is clearly personal encouragement to his king. Coming to help Beowulf, he tries to remind him of his former pledges to invigorate him:

> 'Leofa Biowulf, læst eall tela,
> swa ðu on geoguðfeore geara gecwæde
> þæt ðu ne alæte be ðe lifigendum
> dom gedreosan …' (2663–66a)
>
> ['Dear Beowulf, see the whole thing through properly, in keeping with what you declared long ago in the days of your youth, that while you lived you would not let your reputation fail …']

Here Wiglaf seems as if he totally forgets the formality required when he talks to his king and behaves as if he were Beowulf's senior, trying to encourage him by reminding his former pledge and reassuring that he is not alone. It is likely that the young Wiglaf does not know the prowess of his king first-hand, since Beowulf has

ruled the Geatish people peacefully for a long time, but he may know well that reminding him of his oaths is the most powerful way to encourage his king.[68] This speech in fact has at least two anomalous features, as I have mentioned in Chapter 2. One is the use of metre at the beginning of the speech; line 2663 is the only indisputable instance of starting direct speech with a stressed alliterative syllable in the a-verse and no instances of the a-verse but this one has a vocative as the first element of the verse. These features seem to suggest the spontaneous or urgent nature of Wiglaf's utterance. It is also worth noting that the word of endearment 'leofa' in Old English poetry seems to be used when a senior person addresses his or her junior. When a speaker uses it for his or her senior, it seems to function to soften the tone, as seen in the instances in which Beowulf asks Hrothgar to send his armour to his king Hygelac (1483a), or Abraham's wife Sarah complains to her husband about the behaviour of her maid servant Hagar (2254a). In the remaining instances, the word is always used by a senior or socially superior. Therefore, it is possible that the use of the word 'leofa' also suggests that this speech is rather informal. There is in fact no one else to hear Wiglaf's words, as the others have all disloyally stayed away from the fray. These speeches introduced by '-cweðan' can thus be regarded as more personal and less formal than those introduced by 'maþelode', and in many cases call attention to the lack of a wider audience.

The verb '-sprecan' is used twice to introduce direct speech. The *inquit*, like '-cweðan', seems to introduce more personal and less official speeches than those introduced by 'maþelode', though the contrast is admittedly not so clear as that between 'maþelode' and '-cweðan'. 'Gespræc' is used to introduce Beowulf's last speech before fighting with Grendel when he and his companions are left alone in

[68] See Putter, 'The Hero "Remembers"'. He points out the importance of 'acting in a way that makes this present consistent with the past' in the culture where Beowulf lives.

the hall. Before lying down to his bed, the hero takes off his armour and hands his weapons over to his attendant:

Ða he him of dyde isernbyrnan,
helm of hafelan, sealde his hyrsted sweord,
irena cyst, ombihtþegne,
ond gehealdan het hildegeatwe. (671–74)

[[T]hen he took off his iron mail-coat and his helmet from his head, gave his ornamented sword, the most select of weapons, to his servitor-thane and enjoined him to take care of his battle-gear.][69]

Then he explains this action:

Gespræc þa se goda gylpworda sum,
Beowulf Geata, ær he on bed stige:
'No ic me an herewæsmun hnagran talige
guþgeweorca þonne Grendel hine;
forþan ic hine sweorde swebban nelle,
aldre beneotan, þeah ic eal mæge …' (675–80)

[Then that worthy, Beowulf of the Geats, before he climbed into bed, made a notable pledge: 'I do not reckon myself inferior in my prowess in physical feats of combat any more than Grendel does himself. Accordingly, I do not want to kill him, deprive him of life, by means of the sword, although I perfectly well could ...']

[69] Bradley's translation shows his text has different punctuation, so I changed the word 'when' to 'then'.

He does not simply reiterate the pledge he has made at the feast but tells his companions why he is not going to use weapons more frankly and boldly (681–82a). Formerly, he has said that he will not use any weapons because Grendel does not (433–40a), which suggests that he thinks he will match Grendel in physical strength. In this speech, he expresses his confidence more explicitly. This speech also serves to confirm that he has kept his pledge to fight without armour and arms: 'ac wit on niht sculon / secge ofersittan' [Instead, we shall both of us forgo the sword tonight] (683b–84a).

Wealhtheow's speech to Hrothgar (1169–87) is introduced by 'spræc'. Handing a cup to the king, she gives him advice, telling him to be generous and kind to the Geats and to leave the realm to his kinsmen – and that she has heard about Hrothgar's desire to adopt Beowulf as his son.[70] She tactfully expresses confidence in their nephew Hrothulf:

'… Ic minne can
glædne Hroþulf, þæt he þa geogoðe wile
arum healdan, gyf þu ær þonne he,
wine Scildinga, worold oflætest;
wene ic þæt he mid gode gyldan wille
uncran eaferan gif he þæt eal gemon,
hwæt wit to willan ond to worðmyndum
umborwesendum ær arna gefremedon.' (1180b–87)

['… I know my Hrothwulf is grateful, so that he will wish to treat these young

[70] For an overview of various scholarly interpretations of this speech by Wealhtheow, see Fulk, Bjork and Niles, note on 1169 ff., p. 192; they say that this speech is usually interpreted 'as sincere advice to Hroðgar on a matter of state'.

ones honourably if you, lord and friend of the Scyldings, depart from the world sooner than he. I believe that he will repay our sons with beneficence if he remembers all that we two have previously done for him by way of honours, for his pleasure and for his dignity, during his childhood.']

She is specifically addressing her husband here, as if she is talking privately; she refers to Hrothulf as the third person and never directly addresses him, though he sits next to her husband.[71] She apparently assumes that Hrothulf hears her and is tactfully sending the message that he should not usurp his cousins' position. It is perfectly possible that her 'words have a literal sense', as Gerald Morgen asserts.[72] If she simply means to express her confidence in Hrothulf's fidelity, however, it is a little odd not to speak to him directly when he sits in such close proximity to the king. It is apt not to use the verb 'maþelode' to introduce this speech: such a speech would call too much attention to her coded warning to Hrothgar. Her speech also reveals how she is concerned about her children. This speech serves to make her next speech more natural, where, giving splendid treasures to Beowulf, she asks him to protect her children.

As is seen in Chapter 1, the verb 'sægde' has both message and addressee focus, and thus its use for the Messenger's speech (2900–3027) seems very apt. The Messenger tells the news of Beowulf's death to the troop that have been waiting for the results (2900–06a) and he also tells how Wiglaf watches the dead king (2906b–10a), which explains why Wiglaf himself does not go to those who are waiting to hear the outcome. He describes what will happen afterwards because of the feuds with

[71] Louviot sees it as one of the very few private speeches in *Beowulf*: *Direct Speech*, p. 80.
[72] Gerald Morgan, 'The Treachery of Hrothulf', *English Studies*, 53 (1972), 23–39 (p. 37).

the Frisians and the Swedes (2910b–3007a), which the young Wiglaf might not know very well. The detailed description of the former war with the Swedes conveys the imminence of the unwelcoming future of the Geats. The content and publicity of this speech seem to satisfy the conditions for being introduced by the *inquit* 'maþelode'. If 'maþelode' were chosen solely for the content of the speech it introduces, as McConchie suggests, there would not seem to be a clear reason why this speech is not introduced by the *inquit*. The messenger himself is very vaguely delineated, however, not given a name nor an official position. His role is simply to transmit a message, which may be more important than who the speaker is. The role of this speech seems to be to show the world without Beowulf in order to emphasize the importance of having such a good king to the Geats and the present absence of persons to give authoritative formal pronouncements: the Geats do not have a proper successor to Beowulf and their fate of falling into the state of 'lordlessness' is inevitable, which meaningfully links the end of the poem to the beginning where the Danes had suffered the state of 'lordlessness' until Scyld Scefing arrived.[73]

These speeches that are not introduced by 'maþelode' do not seem to have the same authority, formality, publicness and/or status of speaker as those that are. As for narrative importance, it is worth noting that the speeches that are not introduced by 'maþelode' again do not serve to move the narrative forward but rather to make the transition of the narrative smooth and natural or to confirm that what the speaker has formerly declared is completed properly.

Conclusion

In *Beowulf*, the disproportionate use of 'maþelode' seems to result from the poet's

[73] On Anglo-Saxons' fear of 'lordlessness', see E. G. Stanley, '*Beowulf*: Lordlessness in Ancient Times Is the Theme, as Much as the Glory of Kings, If Not More', *Notes and Queries*, 52 (2005), 267–81.

rigorous choice of *inquits*; and the frequent use of the verb does not mean that it has lost its original sense in the poem, but such speeches as to be introduced by the *inquit* dominate the poem. The poet's use of the *inquit* also shows its close association with the status of an individual in the community, regardless of his or her rank; the *inquit* is not employed for a person who does not have a clear identity as a member of a community nor for a group of people. Note that the Last Survivor has no community and is nameless as the Messenger. This may also explain why the verb is always used in the third-person singular form and never used in the plural form in Old English poetry. Moreover, not only the *inquits* but also the introductions to the speeches in *Beowulf* are closely related to the contents of the speeches to such an extent that they should be taken into serious consideration in appreciating the ensuing speeches. This also corroborates the claim that the speeches are embedded in the poem carefully and purposefully.[74]

[74] The balanced distribution of direct speech in the poem, as Bjork points out, also supports this notion: 'Speech as Gift', p. 999. Brian A. Shaw analyses the fifteen speeches by Beowulf and notes the first seven speeches form 'a series analogous to the last seven' with the eighth as a pivot and discusses the structural and thematic function of those speeches in the poem: 'The Speeches in "Beowulf": A Structural Study', *The Chaucer Review,* 13 (1978), 86–92. Though he does not state that the poet distributes the speeches intentionally, his study suggests so.

Chapter 5

Direct speech and the narrative

Introduction

Direct speech in *Beowulf* is closely related to the events or actions recounted in the narrative voice: the consequences of what the characters have promised or commanded in the speeches are made known in the narrative later, and what has been told in the narrative voice is retold in the speeches later. Direct speech and the narrative voice are interconnected.

In *Beowulf*, direct speech is not only demarcated clearly but also used very selectively; it is not used in the battle or action scenes; the *scop*'s songs and collective utterances are backgrounded by being put in indirect speech (see Chapters 2 and 3). It seems that direct speech has a role in structuring the poem – a role very different from what we usually expect direct speech to have, that is, the representation of real dialogue to promote verisimilitude.[1] I will first examine how commitments, requests or commands expressed in direct speech are fulfilled in the narrative and conversely how accounts told in the narrative are retold in direct speech, and then consider how information on Beowulf given in direct speech serves to characterise him. I hope to show that direct speech and the narrative interact with each other throughout the poem.

Direct speech and action

The speeches in *Beowulf* are often said to be too reflective or digressive to advance the story steadily.[2] This view seems to have prevailed since Andreas Heusler's

[1] Louviot points out that Old English poets never 'used short speeches to imitate the rapidity and vivacity of real-life conversations': *Direct Speech*, p. 29.
[2] See, for instance, Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, pp. lxxxvi–lxxxvii; E. G. Stanley, 'The

seminal article on dialogue in Old Germanic narrative poetry. According to his analysis, more speeches in *Beowulf* can be labelled as 'beschaulich (reflective)' than 'handelnd (active)'.[3] He categorises speeches as 'active' when they have the force to move the narrative forward, and as 'reflective' when they are retrospective, predictive and reflective, and thus delay the story.[4]

Since this categorization is based on the relation between direct speech and the narrative, it seems useful for examining the role of direct speech in the poem in the light of its relationship with the narrative, but on closer examination his actual classification of the speeches in the epic presents some problems. Firstly, some inconsistencies are observable. Secondly, as Stanley observes, 'in practice, as he [Heusler] himself is aware, hardly a single speech in *Beowulf* is wholly active, and except for short whole speeches Heusler has to single out lines to exemplify action in dialogue'.[5] In some speeches, both 'active' and 'reflective' elements are so closely intertwined that it is almost impossible to decide which element is more dominant in such speeches.

Heusler selects the speeches in the following ten scenes as 'active': the Coastguard questions Beowulf (237–300); Wulfgar negotiates with Beowulf and Hrothgar (333–98); Beowulf offers to take up the battle with Grendel (407–55); Hrothgar entrusts him with the hall (655–61); Beowulf promises to take revenge for Æschere (1384–96); Beowulf declares he is ready for an attack on the dragon and

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Narrative Art of *Beowulf*', in *Medieval Narrative: A Symposium*, ed. by Hans Bekker-Nielsen *et al.* (Odense: Odense University Press, 1979), pp. 58–81. On the scholarly debate over the 'inactiveness' of the speeches in *Beowulf*, see Louviot, *Direct Speech*, pp. 87–90.

[3] These English translations may not cover the meanings of the German words.

[4] Andreas Heusler, 'Der Dialog in der Altgermanischen Erzählenden Dichtung', *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur*, 46 (1902), 189–284 (pp. 218–19): 'die wichtigste unterscheidung ist die zwischen handelnder und beschaulicher rede. jene schiebt die epische fabel vorwärte, ist selbst ein stück action. die andre blickt erzählend zurück, weissagt, stellt betrachtungen an: sie hält die fabel auf' (p. 218).

[5] Stanley, 'Narrative Art', p. 69.

says goodbye to his companions (2511b–37); Wiglaf calls on the companions for help and encourages Beowulf (2633–68); Beowulf expresses his last wishes (2729–51, 2794–2816); Wiglaf curses the unfaithful (2864–91); he commands the cremation of Beowulf (3114b–19).[6] The remaining speeches are put into the category 'reflective'. Heusler adds that epic action is best represented in the exchange between Wulfgar and Beowulf (333–55), in Hrothgar's parting words before Grendel's night attack (655–61), in Beowulf's short declaration before the dragon fight (2511b–15), and in Wiglaf's encouragement to his prince (2663–68).[7] Though these four speeches are all short (seven lines at the longest), it is not very clear on what ground they were chosen; Heusler excludes Beowulf's pledge before the fight with Grendel (632–38), which is also short, while including his pledge before the fight with the dragon. Furthermore, he sees Wiglaf's rebuke to the cowardly companions (2864–91) as 'active', but in this speech, 'reflective' elements are rather conspicuous. Wiglaf starts reproaching the companions for their disloyalty by reminding them of Beowulf's generosity once again:

'Þæt, la, mæg secgan se ðe wyle soð specan
þæt se mondryhten, se eow ða maðmas geaf,
eoredgeatwe, þe ge þær on standað,
þonne he on ealubence oft gesealde
healsittendum helm ond byrnan,
þeoden his þegnum, swylce he þrydlicost
ower feor oððe neah findan meahte –
þæt he genunga guðgewædu

[6] Heusler, pp. 218–19. I change the line numbers Heusler gives in his article to the equivalent ones in the text I use.
[7] Heusler, p. 219.

wraðe forwurpe ða hyne wig beget …' (2864–72)

['Any man who means to speak truth may well say that the lord who gave you those precious things, the soldierly trappings in which you are standing there – as he often did bestow on those seated in hall, as a prince to his thanes, helmet and mail-coat at the ale-bench, according as he could find the most splendid ones for you, far or near – that he had utterly thrown away that fighting-dress, to his own hardship when war came upon him ...']

Wiglaf then recounts the king's fight with the dragon, adding at the end: '*W*ergendra to lyt / þrong ymbe þeoden | þa hyne sio þrag becwom' [There were too few defenders clustered about the prince when the crucial moment came to him] (2882b–83). He ends his speech by predicting what will happen to them once the king's death is made known and his thanes' shameful deed disclosed. Certainly, the whole speech itself may be seen as a powerful speech act of denunciation. However, to adhere to the above-mentioned criteria, this speech has to be regarded as 'reflective', since references to Beowulf take up a large part of Wiglaf's reproach and it does not advance the narrative itself to the next stage. Heusler's article was published in 1902, far before J. L. Austin introduced speech-act theory in the 1960's, but here Heusler seems to have classified this speech as 'active', taking into consideration a speech act (=denunciation) residing in the speech.[8] Any speech can be regarded as involving an act of something; it is a different matter whether the content of a speech serves to move the story forward to the next stage in the narrative or not.

Many of the other 'active' speeches also contain some 'reflective' elements. For example, Heusler regards Beowulf's first speech at Heorot (407–55) as 'active', even

[8] See J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, ed. by J. O. Urmson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962).

though Beowulf mentions his past deeds, such as his fight with giants or water-monsters (419–24a). Recounting the past deeds or prowess achieved by the speaker is an essential component of a commitment speech, and in a commitment speech, saying 'I remember…' is not merely retrospective, but part of a projected action (see Chapter 4). Such speech in fact entails not only an 'active' part (i.e., what the speaker is going to do), but also a 'reflective' part (i.e., what the speaker has done) in order to show that the deed the speaker is going to undertake is in accord with his or her past deeds and therefore the speaker is well capable of achieving it. Both 'active' and 'reflective' elements are inseparable in a commitment speech.[9] Since there are a number of commitment speeches in *Beowulf*, the attempt to divide the speeches in the poem into categories of 'active' and 'reflective' does not seem helpful, especially in examining the role of speeches in the poem.

Nevertheless, Heusler's criteria – whether a speech serves to forward the story or not – usefully invite us to consider what 'reflective' speeches consist of.[10] The 'reflective' speeches which Heusler believes delay the narrative, I would argue, consist of at least three different types: in one type the 'reflective' element is part of a commitment speech, in another type, essential information is given on the protagonist or immediate story, and in the final type past deeds or events are verified; the importance of this verification probably reflects the value of oral reports in Anglo-Saxon society. I will discuss the role of speeches which present important information on the hero and the main plot of the poem in the next section. In what follows, I will examine how 'commitment' speeches play a role in advancing the story

[9] For the importance of recalling past prowess in pledging, see Conquergood, p. 28.
[10] Louviot contrasts Heusler's view on 'active' speeches with that of Klaeber, but Klaeber's 'advancing' type of speeches does not seem to be exactly the same as Heusler's. Klaeber sees speeches as 'advancing' if they are dialogic or interactive (see Klaeber, p. lvi); he does not consider whether a speaker talks about future actions or events or whether his or her speech affects the plot of the poem: *Direct Speech*, pp. 87–88.

and how 'verification' speeches function to amplify the story, contributing to presenting the events from different perspectives.

As we have seen, the characters often express commitments in their speeches, which are typically introduced by the *inquit* 'maþelode'. The narrative voice tells us how those commitments expressed in direct speech are executed. The most notable and important commitments are of course those made by the hero Beowulf before his three battles against the monsters. The three battles are undoubtedly the main actions in this poem. Before every battle, Beowulf makes a pledge to fight valiantly to the end, commending his life to God. The 'commitment' speeches by the hero are paired with action scenes: the narrative voice reveals how the hero's commitments have been fulfilled. This pattern is repeated for the three battles. The 'commitment' speeches have roughly the same elements: mention of past deeds, determination to gain glory and decision of how to fight the enemy.[11] Though the same pattern is used, the situations in which the hero gets involved in battles and makes his formal pledges are very different. The presentation of the 'commitment' speeches varies accordingly.

The first 'commitment' speech by the hero is the most elaborately structured.[12] The three elements of the speech are not presented at the same time. Beowulf, who has just arrived at Heorot, tells the Danes that he has already defeated monsters by hand (419–24b: mention of past deeds) and later he makes a pledge to fight for his life after receiving a cup from the queen at the welcoming feast (632–38: determination to gain glory). As is seen above, the poet carefully describes how the hero takes off his armour and gives his weapon to a thane (669–74), and in the

[11] See Perelman, pp. 122–132. She analyses 'commisive' speeches in the light of speech theory and points out that Beowulf's 'beot' consists of three elements: 'his commitment to do battle', 'the manner in which he will fight', and an alternative outcome' (p. 124).
[12] See Nolan and Bloomfield, pp. 504–07. They closely examine the structure of the hero's first 'commitment' speech to explain the meanings and functions of the two Old English words 'gilpcwidas' and 'beotword'.

following speech Beowulf explains to his companions why he will not use weapons (677–87: decision of how to fight the enemy). Though Beowulf does not repeat his intention of fighting alone in this speech, he uses the first-person singular pronouns 'ic' (677, 679, and 680) and 'me' (677 and 681) and the duel 'wit' (683) referring to himself and Grendel, in which his decision to fight alone is manifested. The following fighting scene (745b–819a) shows how he tries to keep his pledge and how he fights and defeats Grendel.

The situation in which Beowulf gets engaged in the battle against Grendel's mother is different; her attack falls unexpectedly on the Danes, who believe that their affliction has ended. As soon as her evil act is reported, Beowulf promptly makes a promise to revenge Æschere, a renowned thane dear to Hrothgar (1392–96), and before plunging into the lair of Grendel's mother, he requests Hrothgar to look after his companions and send his treasures to Hygelac if battle carries him off (1474–87) and makes his second pledge to fight at the risk of his life: 'ic me mid Hruntinge / dom gewyrce, | oþðe mec deað nimeð.' [With Hrunting I shall achieve renown, or else death will carry me off.] (1490b–91). This time, his 'commitment' speech lacks reference to his past prowess, but as the speeches are made after he has just proved his strength, defeating Grendel, it seems unnecessary to mention it. Moreover, his account of fighting with sea-monsters in his youth in reply to Unferth will give him ample qualifications to the fight against Grendel's mother under water. The fighting scene (1492–1590) follows immediately after his pledging speech.

Before the last battle, Beowulf gives his last 'commitment' speech. This time, all elements are gathered together in one continuous series of speeches: his past prowess (2490–2508a), his determination to fight with the dragon (2511b–15), and his strategy for battling with the enemy, that is, his intention to use arms and armour this time and to fight alone (2518b–37). Then, once again, the poet depicts

the fighting scenes (2550–95 and 2669–2711a). All the hero's pledging speeches thus function to move the story on to the main actions.

It is worth noting that pledging words themselves help the hero achieve his glory. In the first battle, before he is about to attack Grendel, 'Gemunde þa se goda, | mæg Higelaces, / æfenspræce' [Then that worthy man, Hygelac's kinsman, bore in mind his speech of that evening] (758–59a); in the last battle, what Wiglaf says to his king to encourage him (2663–68) is 'læst eall tela, / swa ðu on geoguðfeore | geara gecwæde' [see the whole thing through properly, in keeping with what you declared long ago in the days of your youth] (2663b–64). Heusler says that 'active' speeches are themselves a piece of action.[13] Pledges, however, have a veritably active role in giving impetus to the hero to act, as Nolan and Bloomfield note: 'The hero's speech as it is matched by subsequent deeds appeared to serve a ritual function not unlike that of incantation, bolstering the sense of his own ability and fortifying his will to fulfill the tribal definition of heroism by facing death for the community's sake.'[14]

Besides the main commitment speeches by the hero, there are quite a few speeches in which other characters make commitments. In Part 1, several commitments are expressed. The obvious and straightforward examples are those made by the Coastguard (287b–300), who promises to escort them to Heorot and to look after their ship, and the narrative tells us that he has fulfilled the promise to guide them:

> Him þa hildedeor [h]of modigra
> torht getæhte, þæt hie him to mihton
> gegnum gangan (312–14a)

[13] Heusler, p. 218.
[14] Nolan and Bloomfield, p. 502; see also pp. 513–14.

[Then the brave soldier directed them to that dazzling court of men of courage, so that they might get to it directly]

As mentioned above, his own words of parting also confirm that he has left them before reaching the royal hall (316–39), and the anonymous Coastguard reappears later in the narrative to greet Beowulf and his companions when they return home, loading splendid treasures onto the ship; the hero gives the guard a precious sword (1890b–1903a). This scene shows that their ship has been kept well, as promised.

Likewise, Wulfgar (350b–55) promises to make a formal request to Hrothgar for the Geats and to make the king's answer known to them 'ædre' [quickly] (354b). The following scene shows that his commitment has been fulfilled (356–98). Note the poet says: 'Hwearf þa hrædlice | þær Hroðgar sæt' [Briskly, then, he went off to where Hrothgar … was sitting] (356). The herald's word ('ædre') is coordinated with his deed.

The king Hrothgar also makes a commitment; he promises to reward Beowulf handsomely before his fight against Grendel:

'… Ne bið þe wilna gad
gif þu þæt ellenweorc aldre gedigest.' (660b–61)
['… There will be no stinting of your wishes, if you survive that act of courage with your life.']

And after Beowulf has defeated Grendel:

'… Ne bið þe [n]ænigra gad
worolde wilna, þe ic geweald hæbbe.

Ful oft ic for læssan lean teohhode,
hordweorþunge hnahran rince,
sæmran æt sæcce …' (949b–53a)

['… Not one of your desires shall be lacking in life, where I have authority. For less than this I have often enough bestowed rewards, ornaments from treasury, upon a humbler fighting man, less strong in the strife of battle …']

When the hall has been redecorated and the celebration has been started, the poet describes the scene of the giving of gifts at some length (1020–57a). Some items are described in detail:

Ymb þæs helmes hrof heafodbeorge
wirum bewunden wal*u* utan heold,
þæt him fe[o]la laf frecne ne meaht*e*
scurheard sceþðan, þonne scyldfreca
ongean gramum gangan scolde. (1030–34)

[Upon the crown of the helmet a head-guard wound about with wires excluded violent death, so that fierce swords could not do very much harm to the helmet, toughened as it was against the rain of blows falling on it, when the fierce shield-bearer had to sally forth against savage enemies.]

The narrative voice thus confirms that Hrothgar's promise of large rewards to the hero is fulfilled. It is noteworthy that the poet does not give a mere list of treasures but tells us how Hrothgar bestows them to Beowulf:

Ne gefrægn ic freondlicor feower madmas

golde gegyrede gummanna fela

in ealobence oðrum gesellan. (1027–29)

[I have not heard of such a multitude of men at the ale-bench bestowing upon another four gold-ornamented treasures in a fashion more friendly.]

Beowulf later gives the four treasures to Hygelac, explaining the origin of them. The above passage may allude to Hrothgar's giving their history in conversation with the hero.

In Part 2, 'commitment' speeches equally play a role in advancing the narrative; they are also introduced by the *inquit* 'maþelode'. Wiglaf makes a 'commitment' speech before he joins his king in fighting against the dragon. Like Beowulf, Wiglaf starts the speech (2633–60) with stating what he remembers (2633–46a), then declares that he will face death with his lord (2650b–52), and lastly mentions how he will assist the king: 'urum sceal sweord ond helm, / byrne ond b*ea*duscrud, | bam gemæne' [Sword and helmet, mail-coat and armour shall be shared between us both.] (2659b–60). In the following fighting scene, it is revealed how Beowulf finally defeats the dragon with the assistance of Wiglaf (2669–2711a).

After the third battle, the dying Beowulf asks Wiglaf to search the hoard and bring some treasures back so that he can see what he has gained before he dies (2743b–51). We then see in the narrative voice how the faithful thane swiftly fulfils his commands (2752–90a). Then Beowulf conveys to Wiglaf his last commands concerning the treasures of the dragon hoard and his funeral (2799–2808).[15] Obeying his commands, Wiglaf tells his companions to search the dragon hoard and prepare the funeral of Beowulf (3077–3109). This speech itself is the fulfilment of the

[15] This speech is not introduced by 'maþelode', but the introductory passage is defective. See Chapter 1.

commission given to Wiglaf to communicate the will of Beowulf to his companions. In the very last part of the narrative, the poet tells us how the Geatish people executes their king's will: how the funeral is conducted (3137–55), how they construct the barrow and how the treasures are buried within the barrow (3156–68) – the last is not what Beowulf requested (2794–2801), though.

Fulfilment of all the 'commitment' speeches introduced by 'maþelode' is thus made known in the narrative voice. Consequently, those speeches in the poem play a crucial part in moving the story forward. In this respect, they may well be regarded as 'active', to use Heusler's criteria. The three components of the commitment speeches (announcement of past deeds, determination to gain glory, and decision of how to fight the enemy) also contribute to giving the three main actions a common structural frame. The careful structure of the 'commitment' speeches highlights aspects of the narrative that become important later on.

Let me now consider the 'verification' speeches. What has been recounted in the narrative voice is often retold later in direct speech. Certainly, those speeches containing many retelling passages contribute to delaying the narrative, and Heusler naturally puts them in category 'reflective'. They are a chief factor in the 'lack of steady advance' of the narrative, as Klaeber puts it, and they also impede the linear progress of the story.[16] Michael Lapidge makes an insightful analysis of this repetitive feature of the poem. Noting the non-linearity of the narrative not only at an episodic level but also at a lexical level, he examines the poet's narrative discourse by using modern narratological principles and asserts that 'this non-linearity is wholly intentional'.[17] He ascribes it to 'the poet's concern with the mental processes

[16] Klaeber, p. lvii. For a diachronic summary of the scholarship on the structural non-linearity of *Beowulf*, see Shippey, 'Structure and Unity', in *A Beowulf Handbook*, ed. by Robert E. Bjork and John D. Niles (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), pp. 149–74.

[17] Michael Lapidge, '*Beowulf* and Perception', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 111 (2001), 61–97 (p. 63). He explains the effect of the way the poet tells his narrative as

of perception and understanding'. I would like to point out another conceivable factor which may have caused the non-linearity of the narrative by taking account of the relationship between direct speech and the narrative voice. I believe that the speeches in which the characters tell the events they have experienced – Lapidge calls them homodiegetic analepses (internal flashbacks), using Gérard Genette's terminology – function to verify the deeds or events which have already happened, representing the value of such words by participants or eyewitnesses of events in Anglo-Saxon society, and the poet made use of the 'verification' speeches to represent the perspectives of the speakers.

To illustrate the verifying role of the speeches, it is necessary to call to mind the significance of stories told by participants or eyewitnesses of events in Anglo-Saxon society, since this seems to influence the use of direct speech in Old English poetry. But first let me start with mentioning the function of poets in oral societies. Parks states in his examination of the 'I heard' formulae in Old English poetry: 'Oral societies need poets and storytellers to help them with the task of remembering. By building diachrony into his narrative acts, by retelling stories which he heard in the past and thus bringing them back into public recollection, the oral poet performs an inestimable service in ensuring the continuation of cultural life.'[18] The phrase 'stories which he heard in the past' is the key here. The Anglo-Saxon poets got information to be remembered by listening to other people, whether they talked about historical facts or tales. But how did they get new information about events that had just happened, such as the results of wars or the deaths of kings? The answer is not difficult to deduce: from what the participants or eyewitnesses of

follows: 'The use of repetition to inform and encourage the reader's reinterpretation of the text is a literary technique which the structuralist critic Michael Riffaterre has called 'retroaction', namely the process by which a reader is induced to reflect on what has proceeded, so that the text becomes the object of progressive discovery, of a dynamic perception which is constantly changing (p. 67).'

[18] Parks, 'The Traditional Narrator and the "I Heard" Formula', pp. 48–49.

events told them. Louviot points out: 'In modern Western culture, oral testimony is frequently associated with subjectivity, with a more human but also less accurate form of evidence. In Anglo-Saxon culture, on the other hand, oral testimony is seen as the best guarantee of truth.'[19] Anglo-Saxons in fact seems to have attached much value to the direct information of eyewitnesses. Matthew S. Kempshall state:

> In searching for arguments to give credibility to their narrative, medieval historians were well aware of the sensitivity which was required towards the reliability of the extrinsic testimony that was available to them. Bede provides one of the earliest, and most influential, statements of this principle when he runs through the range of material on which his *Ecclesiastical History* had drawn: eyewitnesses, the second-hand accounts of trustworthy authorities, documentary testimony and, last but not least, opinion – what people believed to have happened (fama vulgans)'.[20]

Accounts given by eyewitnesses were evidently regarded as one of the most reliable sources in histories of the period. In such societies, first-hand information must have had special significance as 'the best guarantee of truth.'

There is interesting evidence in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* that indicates the importance of information obtained first-hand in the period. The entry of as early as the year 755 gives an account of the two fights caused by the feud between Cynewulf and Cyneheard.[21] The chronicler says that all were killed but one after each fight. The account of the first battle, in which the king Cynewulf was killed, ends as

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[19] Louviot, *Direct Speech*, pp. 91–92.
[20] Matthew S. Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History, 400-1500* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), p. 289.
[21] Stanley B. Greenfield says that 'an archaic prose' in which this story is written 'suggests an oral narrative tradition or an earlier written source': *A Critical History of Old English Literature* (London: University of London Press, 1966), p.40.

follows:

> [8] Ond hiera se æþeling gehwelcum feoh and feorh gebead, and hiera nænig hit geþicgean nolde, ac hie simle feohtende wæran oþ hie alle lægon butan anum Bryttiscum gisle, ond se swiþe gewundad wæs.
>
> [And the prince offered each of them money and life, and none of them would accept it, but they were continuously fighting, until they all lay dead but one British hostage, and he was severely wounded.][22]

Likewise, the accounts of the second battle, in which Cyneheard was killed, ends just as the first one does:

> [15] Ond hie þa ymb þa gatu feohtende wæron oþ þæt hie þærinne fulgon ond þone æþeling ofslogon ond þa men þe him mid wærun, alle butan anum, se wæs þæs aldormonnes godsunu, ond he his feorh generede, ond þeah he wæs oft gewundad.
>
> [And then they were fighting around the gates, until they went in and killed the prince and the men who were with him, all but one, who was the ealdorman's godson, and he saved his life though he was often wounded]

Since the *Chronicle* is the earliest written record of the society, the chronicler, whenever any written sources were unavailable, must be seen to have received his material from first-hand accounts of these events; or at least he must have been concerned to explain how he got his information. The explicit references to the only

[22] Quotations from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* are taken from Peter S. Baker, *Introduction to Old English*, 3rd edn (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), pp. 186–87; translations are mine.

survivors suggest that the chronicler was eager to emphasize that there was an eye-witness source for these battles and thus his accounts were true. This entry in the *Chronicle* also indicates the special value of direct information to the Anglo-Saxons.

The retelling of events by the characters in *Beowulf* can also be a reflex of Anglo-Saxons' 'concept of poetry as something told, remembered and told again' and the value of first-hand words.[23] Like the chronicler, the *Beowulf* poet may have been conscious of the need to make the sources of stories explicit. This is perceivable in the episode of Sigemund, where the poet tells that the legendary figure Sigemund was always with his nephew Fitela (874b–84a) and thus Sigemund too had someone to transmit his prowess to. The episode is sung by the scop of Hrothgar in the narrative, and the story of Sigemund is only a brief summary; it is suggestive that the *Beowulf* poet decided to mention the name of Fitela. When Sigemund fights against the dragon, Fitela is again referred to:

> He under harne stan,
> æþelinges bearn, ana geneðde
> frecne dæde, ne wæs him Fitela mid (887b–89)
> [Alone he, son of a prince, ventured upon the dangerous deed beneath the grey rock – Fitela was not with him]

Sigemund has no witness this time, but later recountal to Fitela is implicitly the authority for the episode (and the booties could also be used as evidence of what has been achieved). In his fight with Grendel's mother, Beowulf too has no eyewitness around him, but later recountal to Hygelac provides an assumed ultimate source – and he also brings back the head of Grendel and the giant-made hilt with him.

[23] Parks, 'The Traditional Narrator and the "I Heard" Formula', p. 61.

Let us now turn to the main story of *Beowulf*. What has been recounted in the narrative voice is often retold later in direct speech, but the functions, as well as lengths, of those retelling passages vary. The poet seems to exploit the manifold possibilities of direct information. The hero is first described in the narrative voice:

> se wæs moncynnes mægenes strengest
> on þæm dæge þysses lifes,
> æþele ond eacen. (196–98a)

[He, Beowulf, was in strength the sturdiest of humankind at that time in this mortal existence, nobly born and of physique beyond the ordinary.]

This passage is verified in direct speech. In the first passage of direct speech in the poem, the Coastguard comments on the hero's physical appearance: 'Næfre ic maran geseah / eorla ofer eorþan | ðonne is eower sum …' [Never have I seen a greater nobleman on earth than is that notable person in your midst] (247b–48). Not only does this comment serve to reinforce the earlier remark on the hero in the narrative voice, but it is very natural and appropriate for a courteous and dutiful official with good judgment to utter it. It is the foremost interest for the Coastguard to know what kind of people have suddenly arrived at his country, fully armed. In this situation, it is not surprising that Beowulf's abnormal physical greatness draws the guard's attention and astounds him. The king Hrothgar also comments on Beowulf's strength. He cites in his reply to his envoy Wulfgar what he has heard seafarers say of the youth: 'he þritiges / manna mægencræft | on his mundgripe / heaþorof hæbbe' [he, a renowned soldier in combat, has the potent strength of thirty men in his hand-grip] (379b–81a). His comment also serves to verify the former remark on Beowulf in the narrative voice, reinforcing it with specific information. It is natural, at the

same time, for the old, wise king to mention this, as he is most likely to be well acquainted with foreign affairs. The two comments emphasize first- or second-hand information (coming from those who would or should notice) as authorizing the representation of the hero's outstanding strength in the narrative voice.

In Chapter 4 (pp. 185–86), I point out how the words used for the Geats' arms and armour by the Coastguard are different from those used by Wulfgar. The Geats' arms and armour are described in the narrative as well, which seems to be made compatible with the descriptions of them by the Danish officials. Before leaving for Denmark, the Geats carry into the ship 'beorhte frætwe, / guðsearo geatolic' [gleaming pieces of equipment, magnificent fighting-gear] (214b–15a). When they are ashore, 'syrcan hrysedon, / guðgewædo' [their mail-coats, their battle-clothing, jingled] (226b–27a). The Coastguard addresses them as 'searohæbbendra / byrnum werede' [armour-bearing men, protected by corslets] (237b–38a) 'lindhæbbende' [shield-bearing warriors] (245a) and describes Beowulf as 'secg on searwum' [that man in his accoutrements] (249a). Once they start marching to the royal hall escorted by the Coastguard, the descriptions of their armour become more detailed. The poet starts to depict their helmets:

eoforlic scionon
ofer hleorber[g]an gehroden golde,
fah ond fyrheard (303b–05a)

[Above their vizors shone images of the boar: that pugnacious beast, ornamented in gold, gleaming and tempered in the forge]

Then, after the Coastguard has left the Geats, the poet continues to describe their mail-coats:

Guðbyrne scan
heard hondlocen; hringiren scir
song in searwum. Þa hie to sele furðum
in hyra gryregeatwum gangan cwomon (321b–24)

[battle corslet shone, tough, with rings interlocked by skilful hands; shining iron link jangled in their mail-coats.]

Their armour is described as if they are observed closely. And as if the detailed descriptions reflect the herald's perception, Wulfgar refers to the arms and weapons of the Geats in his speech more adjectivally than the Coastguard (see Chapter 4). It is noteworthy that though the arms and amour are thus mentioned twice in the narrative voice and direct speech, it is not quite a case of simple repetition, nor of specification. Moreover, the descriptions of the arms and amour in the narrative voice seem to reflect the speakers' particular best interests: the Coastguard is more concerned with the arrival of the armed warriors and Wulfgar is more interested in the quality of their arms and armour. The descriptions of the same objects both in the narrative voice and direct speech are thus harmonized with one another.

The anonymous Last Survivor's speech can also be seen as one of the 'verification' speeches. The poet mentions the treasures in the Dragon hoard in the narrative:

… oð ðæt (*a*)n ongan
deorcum nihtum draca rics[i]an,
se ðe on hea(um) h(of)e hord beweotode,
stanbeorh stea(*c*)ne; stig under læg
eldum uncuð. Þær on innan giong

nið[ð]a nathwyl(c, se ðe ne)h g(eþ[r]*on*)g
hæðnum horde; hond (eðe gefeng)
(searo) since fah. (2210b–17a)

[… until a lone being began to tyrannize in the dark night, a dragon who kept watch over a hoard within his lofty dwelling-place, a high stone burial chamber. Beneath it lay a path not known to people: into it some man or other had gone who had got within reach of the heathen hoard. His hand … gleaming with costly ornament …]

He does not tell how the Dragon gained the hoard in the burial chamber. An important role of the speech seems to be to make known the origin of the treasure through the words by the single eyewitness to its burial (2247–66). Certainly, the treasures have narrative importance; they are the reward that the hero is going to gain for his life. After the fight with the dragon, Wiglaf is sent to search the hoard:

Geseah ða sigehreðig …
… maððumsigla fealo,
gold glitinian grunde getenge,
wundur on wealle …
… orcas stondan,
fyrnmanna fatu, feormendlease,
hyrstum behrorene; þær wæs helm monig
eald ond omig, earmbeaga fela
searwum gesæled …
…
Swylce he siomian geseah segn eall gylden

heah ofer horde, hondwundra mæst,

gelocen leoðocræftum (2756–69a)

[Then … the brave young thane saw a multitude of precious jewels, gold lying glittering on the ground, wonderful things on the wall … he saw cups, the drinking-vessels of men long gone, standing there lacking the burnishers, shorn of their ornaments by decay. Many a helmet was there, old and rust-eaten, a multitude of arm-rings ingeniously fastened … He also saw hanging high above the hoard a standard all of gold, a thing supreme among marvellous artefacts, woven with the skills of agile fingers.]

What he sees there are such treasures as a lord rewards his thanes with. Who put them there would have been the question that the poet might not want to leave unanswered. As Bonjour begins the section 'The Elegy of the Last Survivor', 'The poet tells us of the origin of the Dragon's hoard.' Although Bonjour himself thinks the speech plays a more important part in 'prepar[ing] the central theme and dominant mood of the end of the poem', it is equally possible that the poet used an elegy to present the Last Survivor's speech so that he could satisfy both purposes.[24] It may also be pointed out that there was some practical reason for using an elegy. Scholars usually regard this speech as comparable with such poems as *The Wanderer* or *the Ruin*.[25] In those poems, nameless speakers express their inner thoughts. This anonymity of elegiac poems may have been useful for the poet, since he would not have needed to introduce another substantial character into the story, but simply present a nameless ('nathwylc': 2233b) nobleman from the past as a speaker –

[24] Bonjour, *Digressions*, pp. 68–69.

[25] For a summary of scholarly interpretations on this speech, see Bjork, 'Digression and Episodes', in *A Beowulf Handbook*, ed. by Robert E. Bjork and John D. Niles (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), pp. 209–10.

indicating thereby that he functioned like the speakers of elegy not as an historically nameable person, but as a representative of a certain sad situation familiar to the audience as a general fact – it also indicates that this is an invention of the poet's in the same way as the elegies are – the anonymity signalling to the audience not a historically verifiable source, but an invented and archetypal figure.

This retelling scheme is employed on a larger scale. The reports of the three great battles by Beowulf (and Wiglaf) are undoubtedly the most noticeable of all the speeches in which the characters tell what has been recounted in the narrative voice. The fight with Grendel, which is recounted in lines 710 to 836 in the narrative voice, is retold to the Danes by Beowulf (958–79); the fight with Grendel's mother, recounted in lines 1492 to 1590 in the narrative voice, is again retold by Beowulf (1652–76). Both battles are once more retold at Hygelac's court (2069b–2100 and 2116b–41a) together with the magnificent feasts at Heorot and the treasures he has received, which is recounted in lines 1020 to 1057a in the narrative voice, when Beowulf reports his adventure in Denmark (2000–2162). Likewise, Wiglaf tells his companions about the fight with the dragon (2864–91), which is first recounted in the narrative voice (2538–99a and 2669–2711a). Wiglaf again tells them about his search of the dragon hoard and the last moment of Beowulf (3087–3100), which is recounted in the narrative voice (2752–92a). Klaeber states of the role of Wiglaf: 'The introduction of an associate in the person of Wiglaf serves to provide not only a welcome helper in the fatal struggle, but an eyewitness and assistant at the king's pathetic death, besides an heir and executor who directs the impressive closing scene of the poem.'[26] To witness and transmit the king's final battle is probably the major reason for the introduction of Wiglaf, as Louviot also points out.[27]

[26] Kleaber, p. xxii.
[27] Louviot, *Direct Speech*, pp. 81–82.

As was pointed out in the previous chapter, the speeches that contain the retelling of the three battles are introduced by the *inquit* 'maþelode' and can be seen as official reports by the characters who have been involved in the actions or events themselves. Reports by a retainer to his lord may well have been normal practice and a duty of a thane, and a court singer might make a song from such reports. Kenneth Sisam states of the long report by Beowulf to Hygelac: 'In early times, when the sources of news were few, a traveller's story on his return was a rare opportunity. A man so famous as Beowulf, who had gone on a great adventure, would be expected to report what had happened.' He considers the function of the hero's report in the narrative as 'a question of verisimilitude'.[28] Since the main actions in this poem, which are recounted in the narrative voice without direct speech, are always recounted later in direct speech, it can also be assumed that the poet intentionally repeated this pattern for some other purpose.

As we have seen, those speeches containing homodiegetic analepses (internal flashbacks) function not only to verify the deeds or events which have already happened, but also to personalize the perspectives of the speakers or to give a certain atmosphere to the narrative. Brodeur says of the recurrence of the same story in *Beowulf*:

> In every retelling, added details, or shifts in emphasis reflect both the poet's need in a specific context and the personal feeling of the teller. In each instance the action or situation is first narrated by the poet; in later narrations the speaker is one of the personages of the poem. This is a technique so consistently used by the poet that we must regard it as deliberate; it is

[28] Kenneth Sisam, *The Structure of 'Beowulf'* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), pp. 45–46.

powerful in its impact, and it lends itself nicely to characterization.[29]

I agree with this view and also think that the *Beowulf* poet may have made use of the reporting speeches not only to verify the great battles but also to present them from different perspectives. These retold stories are by no means simple repetitions of what have already told: they reveal the speakers' perspectives, characters, and feelings.

Beowulf tells his two battles in Denmark twice to the Danes and to the Geats. However, what Beowulf recounts about the battles is not the same. There are some divergencies from the narrative in Beowulf's report. His report to Hygelac, for example, contains many new pieces of information: the name of the companion who has been killed by Grendel, Hondsio (2076), Grendel's 'glof' [glove] (2085a), Freawaru's marriage to Ingeld (2024b–29a), and the origin of the treasures Hrothgar gave to Beowulf (2155–62).[30] Beowulf's speeches are adjusted to the audiences: the hero talks about what his addressees would want to know the most. In responding to Hrothgar the next day after he has defeated Grendel, Beowulf first asserts that he has fulfilled his vow:

> 'We þæt ellenweorc estum miclum,
> feohtan fremedon, frecne geneðdon
> eafoð uncuþes…' (958–60a)
>
> ['With great feelings of goodwill we carried through the contest, that act of courage, and risked the dangerous strength of the unknown…']

[29] Arthur Gilchrist Brodeur, '*Beowulf*: One Poem or Three?', in *Medieval Literature and Folklore Studies: Essays in Honor of Francis Lee Utley*, ed. by Jerome Mandel and Bruce Rosenberg (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1970), pp. 3–26 (p. 4).
[30] Sisam explains why Hondsio's name is mentioned here: 'back in Hygelac's hall where his small company were all well known, "one of my men" would not do. The name must be given' (p. 47).

Then he gives the Danes what they would want to know most, that is, what happened to Grendel. In his homeland, on the other hand, Beowulf's report is partly to entertain Hygelac, who is eager to hear it, as well as having the social function of report to the lord and earning recognition by him (in word and gift).[31]

Moreover, the poet seems to envisage different functions for the battle scenes in the narrative voice and the retelling of them by the characters: the narrative voice focuses on the most dramatic actions of the battles. This is clear from the way in which the poet uses different sentence structures to describe the battle scenes in the narrative voice and those in direct speech. To illustrate this, I would like to compare some passages of the battle scenes from the narrative voice with those from direct speech.[32] The scene in which Grendel kills one of Beowulf's companions is presented with Grendel as the agent and subject of the verbs:

> Ne þæt se aglæca yldan þohte,
> ac he gefeng hraðe forman siðe
> slæpendne rinc, slat unwearnum,
> bat banlocan, blod edrum dranc,
> synsnædum swealh; sona hæfde
> unlyfigendes eal gefeormod,
> fet ond folma. (739–45a)

[The monster did not intend to delay, but as a start he hastily grabbed a sleeping soldier, tore him apart without any trouble, chewed his joints, drank the blood out of his veins and gulped him down in gobbets. Soon he had

[31] Orchard says: 'at Hygelac's court it is the giving of gifts and reporting of deeds that seems paramount': *Companion*, p. 227.
[32] I took this analysis from my master thesis.

consumed the whole of the lifeless man, even his feet and hands.]

Here the unidentified sleeping warrior is described as a mere prey, or food for Grendel: banlocan (742a); blod edrum (742b); synsnædum (743a); fet ond folma (745a). All are parts of body. The verbs of action (slat (741b); bat (742a); dranc (742b); swealh (743a)) further emphasise the greed of the monster. The paratactic syntax effectively conveys the speed of the attack. Beowulf recounts this particular incident in his report to Hygelac:

'… Þær wæs Hondscio hil*d* onsæge,
feorhbealu fægum; he fyrmest læg,
gyrded cempa; him Grendel wearð,
mærum mag*u*þegne to muðbonan,
leofes mannes lic eall forswealg …' (2076–80)

['… The combat there was the downfall of Hondscio, and the mortal ruin of the doomed man: he, a girded soldier, was the first to lie dead. Grendel was the renowned young thane's killer, using his mouth: he completely gulped down the dear man's body ...']

The heavy use of variations seems to convey the hero's personal feelings towards the thane. The story is told, not from Grendel's point of view, but through datives that present it as what was experienced by Hondscio there variation is used rather than swift successive actions: the dative singular noun 'fægum' (2077a) is in parallel variation with 'Hondscio' (2076a); gyrded cempa (2078a) with 'he '(2077b); 'mærum mag*u*þegne' (2079a) with 'him' (2078b). The use of these variation, slowing down the pace of his speech, highlights the only verb of action 'forswealg' (2080b) at the end of

the passage. Furthermore, the phrase 'leofes mannes' (2080a) emphasizes Beowulf's and Hygelac's connection with the dead companion. Here, Grendel's sequential actions in the narrative are condensed into the compound 'to muðbonan' (2079b), taken out of subject case. In the narrative, the focus is on the movement of the monster, while it is on the doomed man in the speech by Beowulf.

The same technique is also observable in the battle between Beowulf and Grendel's mother. The poet describes how Beowulf kills her in the narrative:

> He gefeng þa fetelhilt, freca Scyldinga
> hreoh ond heorogrim, hringmæl gebrægd
> aldres orwena, yrringa sloh,
> þæt hire wið halse heard grapode,
> banhringas bræc; bil eal ðurhwod
> fægne flæschoman, heo on flet gecrong (1563–68)

> [So, bold hero of the Scyldings, fierce and deadly grim, he grabbed the bound hilt, unsheathed the ring-embellished sword and, not expecting to survive, struck angrily – so that it caught her hard on her neck and smashed the rings of bone: clean through her doomed flesh clove the blade. She fell dead to the floor.]

This passage describes the moment that Beowulf defeats Grendel's mother. The way in which the poet describes how the edge goes through the monster's neck (1566–68) is note-worthy. The word 'heard' (1566b), which is an adjective used as noun, meaning 'the hard edge of the sword', has two verbs 'grapode' (1566b) and 'bræc' (1567a). The phrase 'banhringas bræc' is not only in parallel variation with 'hire wið halse heard grapode', but also taken to show the progressive movement of the sword.

Here the agent of action is switched from Beowulf to the edge of the sword. Beowulf neatly recapitulates the beheading of the monster in his report:

'… ond ic heafde becearf
in ðam [guð]sele Grendeles modor
eacnum ecgum …' (2138b–40a)

['… and I sliced off the head of Grendel's mother in the hall of battle, with the edge of a sword unwontedly huge …']

In the narrative, the poet gives a graphic description of Beowulf's beheading of Grendel's mother; it is expressed by the movement of the weapon, which is the subject of the verbs. However, the poet does not use the word 'behead'. In his speech, the subject is naturally Beowulf; and he gives a clear and concise paraphrase without rhetorical heightening of his decapitation of the monster.

Likewise, the poet tells how Wiglaf helps his king in the narrative:

Ne hedde he þæs heafolan, ac sio hand gebarn
modiges mannes þær he his mæges healp,
þæt he þone niðgæst nioðor hwene sloh,
secg on searwum, þæt ðæt sweord gedeaf
fah ond fæted, þæt ðæt fyr ongon
sweðrian syððan. (2697–2702a)

[He did not bother about the head but the brave man's hand was burnt as he helped his kinsman in that he, this man in his armour, struck the spiteful creature somewhat lower down, so that the sword, gleaming and gold-plated, plunged in; and forthwith the fire began to abate.]

The poet describes how Wiglaf deals with the dragon in detail. Here, at the critical moment, the poet again changes the subjects of the verbs, from Wiglaf to the sword and to the fire. Wiglaf tells his companions about the fight with the dragon (2864–91). He paraphrases the same moment in his speech:

> '… symle wæs þy sæmra þonne ic sweorde drep
> ferhðgeniðlan, fyr unswiðor
> weoll of gewitte ...' (2880–02a)
>
> ['… Once I had stabbed the life-menacing enemy with my sword he grew steadily feebler and the fire billowed less fiercely from his head …']

Like Beowulf's report, this paraphrase is clear and concise without rhetorical aggrandizement. Wiglaf does not mention how he risked his life nor how his help was vital to the king's victory.

It seems obvious that the poet differentiates the syntax conveying the action in the three great battles from that of the battles recounted by the characters. The scenes of conflict recounted by the characters are devoid of detailed descriptions of action. Although they are less dramatic, they are less polyvalent, serving to clarify the situations of battle. Most importantly, they seem to be intended to reveal the speakers' points of view or stances.

Louviot points out: 'Speeches that comment on the action or its consequences, instead of carrying it on, are especially widespread in *Beowulf*, but they are common in other Old English narrative poems as well'. According to her analysis, the use of such comments in direct speech in Old English poems are systematic enough to

regard this practice as conventional.[33] She says that these comments are sometimes 'used to focus, not so much on the character's thoughts but rather on what they reveal of the actual situation', and maintains that 'Beowulf's description by the coastguard is a famous case in point (237–51)'. She cites a passage of direct speech in *Christ and Satan* (385–98) as the same type. The passage is the collective complaints of devils who have experienced the Harrowing of Hell. The passage in *Christ and Satan*, as Louviot points out, amply expands the narrator's short reference to the Harrowing (378b–81), closely preceding the speech. She explains that one of the advantages of using a character to convey information on outside events is that 'the character has the authority of a direct witness', pointing out that '*Christ and Satan*'s narrator cannot claim to have witnessed the events described, whereas the demons are actually there'.[34] Although it is undeniable that both comments have the broadly similar function of revealing the situations, there is an apparent difference in the use of this convention between the two poems. The devils seem to be used as eyewitnesses simply to add more detailed information to what has just told in the narrative, whereas the Coastguard's comment occurs quite naturally when he is conducting his official duties, enquiring the strangers. His comment can certainly be taken as reflecting his state of mind, since he is assessing whether the strangers are enemies or not.

Direct speech and the narrative in *Beowulf* consistently interact with each other, sometimes advancing the story and sometimes verifying the actions made by characters in the narrative. It is remarkable that the poet achieves various effects by using the value of reports by participants or witnesses in the society. The way in which the three great battles are told in the narrative may be compared with running

[33] Louviot, *Direct Speech*, pp. 90–94.
[34] Louviot, *Direct Speech*, p. 91.

commentaries in the news, while the way in which the characters retell their experiences is similar to news digests; the former is more dramatic and unpredictable, the latter more organized and concise.

If Anglo-Saxon poets did not use direct speech to imitate real conversations, i.e., fast-alternating exchanges, in the first place but gave it different roles, the notion that direct speech in Old English poems is digressive and tends to retard the narrative can be an obstacle to appreciating the poetic corpus.

Direct speech and the hero Beowulf

Some speeches (or parts of speeches) which Heusler regards as 'reflective' can be divided further into three types according to the role that direct speech plays: in one type the role of direct speech is to commit the speaker to a future action; in a second type its role is to verify the deeds or events in the narrative which Beowulf has been involved in, and the third, to which I will now turn, is to give important information about the protagonist or the immediate story, information which serves to amplify the life of the hero and fills some gaps of the narrative. As we shall see, these types cannot always be kept distinct and some speeches of the third type overlap with the second. It is undeniable that Hrothgar's 'sermon' and Wealhtheow's two speeches are not directly related to the hero or his main actions, but they can still be seen as serving to emphasise that Beowulf possesses such qualities as are needed in a good ruler. In this respect, those speeches also have narrative significance in relation to the hero.

Many elements in the speeches that amplify the narrative contain what are normally regarded as digressions.[35] In his influential book *The Digressions in*

[35] For the list of digressions in *Beowulf*, see Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, p. lxxxiv. They use the terms 'digressions' and 'episodes' synonymously (see footnote 1, p. lxxxiv); I shall therefore use the term 'digressions' only.

'Beowulf', Bonjour examines all the digressions in the poem and shows how they aesthetically contribute to the poem.[36] Though I mostly agree with his arguments, Bonjour does not distinguish between the digressions in direct speech and those that are not in direct speech but in the narrative voice.[37] I would like to show that the digressions that take the form of direct speech function to amplify the life and character of Beowulf and thus they do in fact contribute to the main story; furthermore, it is possible that the poet purposefully put these digressions in direct speech to emphasise their importance in the narrative.[38]

The first series of direct speech used in the early part of the poem functions to introduce the hero to the audience. As seen above, his physical prominence and strength are reinforced by the words of the Coastguard (247b–51a) and the king Hrothgar (377–81a). The hero's name is revealed by Beowulf himself, who announces it in replying to Wulfgar, the herald (343b). Hrothgar says to Wulfgar that he has known Beowulf and his father Ecgtheow, to whom the Geatish king Hrethel gave his only daughter in marriage (372–75a). Hrothgar reveals the details of his relations

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[36] There have been numerous studies of the 'digressions' since Bonjour's; for example, Robert E. Kaske discusses them in the light of *sapientia et fortitudo* ('*Beowulf*', in *Critical Approaches to Six Major English Works: Beowulf through Paradise Lost,* ed.by Robert M. Lumiansky and Herschel Baker (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968), 3–40); Hans-Jürgen Diller attempts to redefine and classify them, using Roman Jakobson's theories of speech pathology ('Contiguity and Similarity in the *Beowulf* Digressions', in *Medieval Studies Conference, Aachen, 1983*, ed. by Wolf-Dietrich Bald and Horst Weinstock, Bamberger Beiträge zur Englischen Sprachwissenschaft 15 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1984), pp. 71–83); Clare Kinney argues that digressions have dynamic autonomy ('The Needs of the Moment: Poetic Foregrounding as a Narrative Device in *Beowulf*', *Studies in Philology*, 82 (1985), 295–314); Ward Parks explains the mnemonic function of digressions ('Interperformativity and *Beowulf*', *Narodna umjetnost*, 26 (1989), 25–35). Bonjour's work, however, is most relevant to my argument in that it treats the 'digressions' as parts of an integrated whole. For a summary of the scholarship on this subject, see Bjork, 'Digression and Episodes', pp. 193–212.

[37] 'The object of the present essay is … a systematic study of the digressions in *Beowulf*, from a purely artistic point of view' (p. xiii).

[38] Klaeber notes that 'several of these digressions contain welcome information about the hero's life' (p. liii); Fulk, Bjork, and Niles also say, from a point of view different from mine, that some digressions 'are utilitarian in nature, supplying useful information, particularly about the chief characters' (p. lxxxv).

with Ecgtheow in his speech to Beowulf (459–72). In his initial greetings to Hrothgar, Beowulf mentions his fights with giants and water-monsters as a part of his commitment speech (419–24a) and later gives a more detailed story about his fight with sea-monsters in replying to Unferth (550–69a). Before the hero's first battle, the 'reflective' speeches (or 'reflective' parts of the speeches) reveal Beowulf's appearance, his strength, his parentage and his former exploits. Through the speeches, we learn much background information on the hero.

Most speeches by Hrothgar, which Heusler labelled as 'reflective', do not forward the story but present essential information on the main plot of the poem. It is his speeches that give more information not only about Beowulf but also about his own predicaments caused by Grendel and the Danish warriors' failure to defend the hall from Grendel's attacks (473–88). After the attack by Grendel's mother, it is again the king who gives Beowulf the detailed account of the ghastly mere under which is the monsters' dwelling (1330–76a). The king, wise and old, is certainly the most appropriate choice for the conveyer of such information. As Louviot states, Old English poetic characters 'that are allowed to speak are usually quite prestigious, which further reinforces their authority'.[39] These speeches by the king can also be seen as verifying the facts given by the poet on the basis of first-hand information (transmitted down the generations) by eyewitnesses. Hrothgar is after all the person who has been suffering the calamity.

In the latter part, the history of the Geatish dynasty and its relationship with the surrounding countries are often referred to both in the speeches and in the narrative voice. The speeches which contain historic accounts are seen as 'reflective' by Heusler, and normally regarded as digressive. As Brodeur says, however, these historical

[39] Louviot, *Direct Speech*, p. 257.

accounts 'are part of Beowulf's life'.[40] Klaeber also notes that '[t]he frequent mention of Hygelac's Frankish raid is accounted for by the fact that it is closely bound up both with Geatish history in general and with Beowulf's life in particular'.[41] Moreover, Brodeur considers that the poet needed the historical settings to give his poem epic dignity. Noting that the main plot of *Beowulf* is derived from folk-tale as that of Homer's *Odyssey*, Brodeur states:

> The author of *Beowulf*, like Homer, recognized the necessity of grounding his hero's great actions firmly in place and time, and giving them emotional and ethical value through association with events and personages familiar and significant to the audience.[42]

It is most likely that the function of the speeches containing historical events is to insert Beowulf into the royal line and to present him as a quasi-historical figure in the Geatish dynasty and to make it clear that Geats have enmities that are going to wipe them off the map.[43] These historical 'digressions' serve to amplify the life of Beowulf (and the doom of the Geats), just as the speeches in the early part of the poem do and they again present the 'facts' of the poem as deriving from transmitted oral testimony.

These historical accounts are not presented in chronological order. As Bonjour notes, 'there was no absolute necessity for the poet to follow the chronological order here, were it only for the simple reason that a knowledge of the historical events

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[40] Brodeur, *Art*, p. 135.
[41] Klaeber, p. liv.
[42] Brodeur, *Art*, p. 80. Stanley B. Greenfield also says of the historic accounts in *Beowulf*: 'This historic destiny, in a centrally significant way, universalizes and makes epic this Old English heroic poem.': 'Geatish History: Poetic Art and Epic Quality in *Beowulf*', *Neophilologus*, 47 (1963), 211–17 (p. 216).
[43] Brodeur, *Art*, p. 84.

underlying these episodes could certainly be assumed on the part of those for whom *Beowulf* was intended'.[44] It seems that the poet could freely refer to historical personages and events without worrying about the chronology of them, once he established the hero as a thane of Hygelac (194b) and a grandson of the Geatish king Hrethel, Hygelac's father (372–75a).

The poet, for example, refers to the wars between the Geats and the Swedes whenever this is necessary or useful for the narrative. Ongentheow's name is mentioned in the poem three times – once in the narrative voice (1968a) and twice in a speech by Beowulf (2475a and 2486a) – before the Messenger gives a full account of how the Swedish king was slain (2922–98). His speech serves to make the renewal of the feud between the Geats and the Swedes sound imminent and probable, now that their king has died. Again, the function of the speech is to present not only the doom of the Geats but also the impact of the death of the powerful king Beowulf which would change the balance of power between Geatland and the surrounding countries. Furthermore, the speech plays an important role in clarifying the causes of the feuds between the Geats and their neighbours: it is Hygelac and Haethcyn that got actively involved in these conflicts, not Beowulf himself, who is never represented as a troublemaker. These historical accounts are sowed throughout the poem and some phases of them are expanded upon when the narrative reaches the most relevant point. Such expansions are always made in direct speech by the most appropriate characters, if they are relevant to the hero's life and character.

Most of the above-mentioned accounts overlap with the digressions examined in the second section of Bonjour's book, 'Digressions Concerning Episodes of Beowulf's Life and Geatish History', which contains nine episodes: 1. Beowulf's Fight against the Giants (419–24a), 2. The Ecgtheow Digression (459–72), 3. The Unferth

[44] Bonjour, *Digressions*, pp. 41–42.

Intermezzo (499–603), 4. The Fall of Hygelac (1197–1214), 5. Beowulf's Inglorious Youth (2183–89), 6. Hygelac's Death in Friesland, Beowulf's Return by Swimming and his Guardianship of Heardred; the Second Swedish Wars (2354–96), 7. King Hrethel, the End of Herebeald, the Earlier War with the Swedes, Beowulf's Slaying of Daeghrefn in Friesland (2426–2509), 8. Weohstan's Slaying of Eanmund in the Later Swedish-Geatish War (2602–25), and 9. Hygelac's Fall; the Battle at Ravenswood in the Earlier Swedish War (2910b–3007).[45] Bonjour (referring to Klaeber) says of the digressions in this section: 'Most, if not all, of them may be considered in fact to "contain welcome information about the hero's life"'.[46] If the digressions in the speeches alone are considered, this point is also pertinent, as we have seen above. Only one digression about Beowulf's life (i.e., Beowulf's inglorious youth) and two about Geatish history (i.e., his guardianship of Heardred and Weohstan's slaying of Eanmund) in this section do not appear in direct speech – I shall return to these three digressions.[47] It is possible that the primary function of what have formerly been considered as digressions was to fill in the gaps of the hero's life: his life before his adventure in Denmark, his life within the Geatish dynasty before he becomes king, and the grim fate of his people that his death is likely to bring about. It also seems certain that the poet used direct speech to emphasise some aspects of the hero's character.

The digressions, which Bonjour puts in that section above, are what Lapidge categorises as 'completing homodiegetic analepses' (that is, they fill in some earlier gaps in the narrative after the event).[48] This type of digression is also used in Homeric epics and its function there seems to be similar to that in *Beowulf*, though

[45] See Fulk, Bjork, and Niles give a list of digressions in the poem (p. lxxxiv).
[46] Bonjour, *Digressions*, p. 12; Klaeber, p. liii.
[47] The digressions 4. The Fall of Hygelac (1197–1214) and 6. Hygelac's Death (2354–96) are in the narrative, but these accounts are retold within Beowulf's and the Messenger's speeches.
[48] Lapidge, p. 73.

the ways in which the two poets use it are different.

In the *Odyssey*, for instance, the hero Odysseus comes back home disguised as a beggar to hide his identity from the insolent suitors troubling his wife Penelope. After she gets information on her husband from the disguised Odysseus himself, she tells Eurycleia, Odysseus' own old nurse, to wash his feet; he reluctantly allows this:

> νίζε δ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἆσσον ἰοῦσα ἄναχθ᾽ ἑόν· αὐτίκα δ᾽ ἔγνω
> οὐλήν, τήν ποτέ μιν σῦς ἤλασε λευκῷ ὀδόντι
> Παρνησόνδ᾽ ἐλθόντα μετ᾽ Αὐτόλυκόν τε καὶ υἷας,
> μητρὸς ἑῆς πάτερ᾽ ἐσθλόν, ὃς ἀνθρώπους ἐκέκαστο
> κλεπτοσύνῃ θ᾽ ὅρκῳ τε· θεὸς δέ οἱ αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν
> Ἑρμείας· … (19. 392–97)

[So she drew near and began to wash her lord; at once she recognized the scar of the wound which long ago a boar had dealt him with his white tusk, when Odysseus had gone to Parnassus to visit Autolycus, his mother's noble father, who excelled all men in thievery and in oaths, and the sons [of] Autolycus. It was a god himself who had given him this skill, to wit, Hermes …]

Immediately after mentioning that the old nurse recognises the scar on one of Odysseus' feet ('αὐτίκα δ᾽ ἔγνω / οὐλήν': 392–93), Homer digresses from the main story and starts telling how the hero has got the scar. Erich Auerbach explains how Homer starts this episode, which takes up seventy-four lines:

> To the word scar (v. 393) there is first attached a relative clause ("which once long ago a boar …"), which enlarges into a voluminous syntactical parenthesis; into this an independent sentence unexpectedly intrudes (v. 396: "A god

himself gave him …"), which quietly disentangles itself from syntactical subordination[49]

The episode of Odysseus' scar, even containing some passages of direct speech (19. 403–12), is recounted just as is the main story.[50] This episode certainly retards the main story; Auerbach ascribes the retardation to 'the need of the Homeric style to leave nothing which it mentions half in darkness and unexternalized', maintaining that 'the Homeric style knows only a foreground, only a uniformly illuminated, uniformly objective present'.[51] This analysis of Homeric use of digressions is, to some extent, true of that of the *Beowulf* poet, especially in regard to the attempt to externalise everything about the hero.

An example of a 'completing homodiegetic analepsis' in *Beowulf* that is similar to Homeric digressions is the Last Survivor's speech, which has been examined above. I have discussed its narrative importance: it tells us the origin of the treasure which the hero is going to gain as reward for his last fight. I think that the speech is also evidence that the poet tries to leave nothing unexplained. Moreover, this digression is quite comparable with Odysseus' scar in that it starts soon after the theft from the dragon hoard is mentioned (2214b–31a).[52]

This is not the typical way of using digressions in *Beowulf*. The *Beowulf* poet does not start digressing immediately after he mentions something that may need background information but integrates the digressions into the main plot when they

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[49] Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. by Willard R. Trask (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 7.
[50] John M. Foley points out that 'the episode is framed via ring-composition (393/465)': *Homer's Traditional Art* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), p. 257. On the importance of Homeric ring structure, see Ward Parks, 'Ring Structure and Narrative Embedding in Homer and *Beowulf*', Neuphilologische Mitteilungen, 89 (1988), 237–51.
[51] Auerbach, pp. 5–7.
[52] Diller re-classifies the digression of the Last Survivor as the 'story of the dragon hoard', which are in lines 2213 to 2324 (pp. 73–74 and p. 80).

are more contextually appropriate. In line 454b, for example, Beowulf mentions that his mail-coat is an heirloom from Hrethel ('Hrædlan laf'), his lord Hygelac's father. At this point, we know already that the king Hrethel is his grandfather (373–75a), but we do not know about the relationship between Beowulf and Hrethel, that is, how the king treated his daughter's son, though reference to the king's name may sufficiently convey why Beowulf wants his mail-coat to be given back to Hygelac, if he is defeated by Grendel. Later he himself reveals in his speech how Hrethel treated him, when he talks about the succession of the Geatish dynasty, looking back on his own life:

'… Ic wæs syfanwintre þa mec sin(*c*)a baldor,
freawine folca æt minum fæder genam;
heold mec ond hæfde Hreðel cyning,
geaf me sinc ond symbel, sibbe gemunde;
næs ic him to life laðra owihte,
beorn in burgum, þonne his bearna hwylc,
Herebeald ond Hæðcyn oððe Hygelac min …' (2428–34)

['… I was a seven-year-old when the ruler rich in treasures, lord and friend of the people, received me from my father. King Hrethel kept me and looked after me, gave me riches and feasting, and was ever mindful of our relationship. Throughout his life I was not a whit less dear to him as a young man within his dwellings than was any of his sons, Herebeald and Hæthcyn or my own Hygelac…']

Here we understand how the heirloom from Hrethel came to be in Beowulf's possession. Like Homer, the *Beowulf* poet may have tried to leave nothing that he

mentions about the hero 'half in darkness', but unlike Homer, he chooses to do this through the mouths of the characters. This use of direct speech may be a way of authenticating and foregrounding important information in Old English poetry.

The poet treats these digressions differently from those found in the narrative voice. Brodeur notes the difference between the narrative manner of heroic legend and that of historical matter and says: 'In contrast with the elliptical, allusive manner in which the legendary episodes are told, the events of historical tradition are reported clearly, and apparently completely.'[53] As we have seen, those digressions found in direct speech are all related to Beowulf and the main story. Fulk, Bjork, and Niles also point out that Beowulf 'is the only character we see in the whole cycle of life'.[54] Direct speech, I believe, plays a crucial part in presenting his whole life to us. It is worth noting that the information on the hero is conveyed through direct speech which is introduced by the *inquit* 'maþelode'.

Now let me turn to Hrothgar's speech delivered after Beowulf's victory over Grendel's mother (1700–84) and Wealhtheow's two speeches (1169–87 and 1216–31). These speeches serve to make the good qualities of the hero stand out by offering three contrasts to the hero who transcends all three: Heremod, Hrothgar, and Hrothulf.

Hrothgar's speech, or so-called 'sermon', is considered, not surprisingly, as a 'reflective' speech. Receiving the booty from Beowulf, who has just returned from the lair of the monsters, Hrothgar gives a long speech addressing Beowulf (1700–84).[55] It consists of four distinct parts: 1. praise for Beowulf (1700–09a), 2. the episode of Heremod (1709b–24a), 3. 'sermon' (1724b–68), and 4. his own experience as king

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[53] Brodeur, *Art*, p. 136.
[54] Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, p. cviii. Peter Clemoes states: 'The span of the hero is the span of the poem': 'Action in *Beowulf* and Our Perception of It', in *Old English Poetry: Essays on Style*, ed. by Daniel G. Calder (London: University of California Press, 1979), pp. 147–68 (p. 167).
[55] See above Chapter 4.

(1769–84).[56] The second and third parts are certainly digressive but still quite relevant to the later life of Beowulf, as Bonjour points out that they are 'a kind of preparation and prologue to Beowulf's future career as a king'.[57] After praising Beowulf's achievement, the old king gives the hero a moral lesson, using the figure of Heremod as an *exemplum in malo*: Heremod too achieved glorious deeds when young but he turned evil. Bonjour states that the episode implies that 'Beowulf is now practically as mighty and glorious as Heremod at the height of his career (who was also "strongest of mankind"), but that he has yet to show greater moral qualities than Heremod to escape a similar disastrous reversal'.[58] However, Hrothgar virtually admits that Beowulf is already strong in arm and wise in spirit: 'Eal þu hit geþyldum healdest, / mægen mid modes snyttrum' [All this physical strength you govern restrainedly with discretion of mind] (1705b–06a). The episode of Heremod, used before (901–15) and disguised as admonition here, serves to characterize the hero by contrast. Nevertheless, the king's admonition is timely, as it is delivered to the hero who is now in the same situation as Heremod was before he turned to be a terrible king: it would not be surprising if a young warrior, who has just proved his extraordinary strength and gained tremendous treasures, fell victim to arrogance and greed, following in the footsteps of Heremod.

Hrothgar himself has avoided the evil that Heremod perpetrated and successfully ruled the Danes for a long time (1769–73). Nevertheless, he suffers a similar reversal of fate ('edwenden'):

> '… Hwæt, me þæs on eþle edwenden cwom,
> gyrn æfter gomene, seoþðan Grendel wearð,

[56] See Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, note on 1700–84, p. 213. I follow their divisions here.
[57] Bonjour, *Digressions*, p. 50.
[58] Bonjour, *Digressions*, p. 49.

ealdgewinna, ingenga min;

ic þære socne singales wæg

modceare micle …' (1774–78a)

['… But see: the reverse of that befell me within my native land, misery following mirth when Grendel, the ancient enemy, became an intruder upon me. I endured unceasingly much anxiety of mind on account of that struggle …']

Ideal king as he is, Hrothgar is helpless when he experiences 'edwenden'. Bonjour says that 'Beowulf […] once in the position of a king, actually transcends by far this picture of an ideal king with the ultimate sacrifice of his own life in favour of his people, the significance of which is stressed by the very contrast with Hrothgar's own attitude towards Grendel'.[59] I think that Bonjour is right; the old Beowulf does not just allow things to happen but chooses to fight against the dragon in his old age: he transcends Hrothgar. The speech emphasises that the hero has excellent mind as well as extraordinary physical strength, which is manifested in the latter part of the poem.[60] Hrothgar's speech has, though implicitly, a certain role in giving a contrast between the two Danish kings (i.e., Heremod and Hrothgar) and the king Beowulf: unlike Heremod, he does not become presumptuous nor avaricious, and unlike Hrothgar, he does not become physically weak in his old age.[61]

Wealhtheow gives two speeches at the celebration of Beowulf's defeat against Grendel. Her speeches can also be seen as a means to highlight some good qualities of Beowulf as a thoughtful retainer and loyal nephew. Her first speech (1169–87) is

[59] Bonjour, *Digressions*, pp. 52–53.
[60] Sisam, pp. 23–24; see also Burrow, *The Ages of Man*, pp. 123–34: he states that Beowulf 'does not display the physical infirmities of age, as Hrothgar does' (p. 130).
[61] See Constance B. Hieatt, 'Modþryðo and Heremod: Intertwined Threads in the *Beowulf*-poet's Web of Words', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 83 (1984), 173–82 (p. 176).

made when she passes a cup to Hrothgar: she urges him to be generous to the Geats; then she says that she has heard the king's desire to adopt Beowulf as his own son. Without expressing what she thinks of his decision, she continues to advise him to leave his kingdom to his own kinsmen. Finally, she talks about their nephew Hrothulf, who is sitting nearby. While some critics see her speech as typical advice by a queen, some do not take it at face value. Shippey, for example, maintains that Wealhtheow 'sees Beowulf as her sons' rival and – apparently – moves from Beowulf to her nephew Hrothulf as, by association, another potential threat'.[62] Her mention of their nephew is not very relevant on the surface to either Beowulf himself or his battles. In her second speech (1216–31), however, she explicitly asks Beowulf to protect her children when she comes to offer him a cup: 'ond þyssum cnyhtum wes / lara liðe' [and be kindly disposed towards these boys in giving them good counsels.] (1219b–20a); 'Beo þu suna minum / dædum gedefe, | dreamhealdende.' [Having happiness yourself, be good to my sons in the things you do for them.] (1226b–27). It is evident that the queen is concerned about the relationship between her sons and Hrothulf. In his farewell greetings to Hrothgar (1818–39), Beowulf promises to welcome Hrethric, Hrothgar's elder son, if he visits Geatland. Robinson considers his reply as implicit assurance of Beowulf's support to Hrethric, not just 'a polite invitation', saying that 'Beowulf dares not speak so openly' in the presence of Hrothulf.[63] Wealhtheow's speeches can thus be seen as serving to give the hero the opportunity to demonstrate his diplomatic capability, revealing another aspect of the hero as a wise and thoughtful thane. He is not simply a warrior of exceptional strength. It is worth noting that the queen says to Beowulf: 'ic þe þæs lean geman.'

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[62] Shippey, 'Principles', p. 114. See also John M. Hill, 'Beowulf and the Danish Succession: Gift Giving as an Occasion for Complex Gesture', *Medievalia et Humanistica*, 11 (1982), 177–97 (pp. 186–87). He suggests that 'Wealhtheow worries so much about' Hrothgar's promise to adopt Beowulf as a son 'that she would even offer Hroþulf in preference to Beowulf' (p. 187).

[63] Robinson, *Appositive Style*, p. 5.

[I shall keep your reward for this in mind] (1220b), immediately after she asks him to be kind to her children. The word 'geman' here implies the queen's promise to act in the future in accordance with the present: she makes a formal request and Beowulf tries to accommodate it in his farewell speech to the Danes, though he does not answer her on the spot. This speech by the queen may well be considered 'active', as it has a certain force to induce action.

Now I shall return to the three digressions that are not in direct speech but which are in the section of Bonjour's book 'Digressions Concerning Episodes of Beowulf's Life and Geatish History': one digression about Beowulf's life (i.e., Beowulf's inglorious youth) and two about Geatish history (i.e., his guardianship of Heardred and Weohstan's slaying of Eanmund). Here I would like to consider if there is any reason why the poet chose to narrate these three 'digressions' in the narrative voice and the others in direct speech.

The digression 'Beowulf's inglorious youth' (2183b–89) seems to be related to the Danish warriors, Hrothulf, Unferth and Heremod.[64] This digression appears toward the end of Part 1 of the poem:

Hean wæs lange,
swa hyne Geata bearn godne ne tealdon,
ne hyne on medobence micles wyrðne
(dr*y*)hten We*der*a gedon wolde;
swyðe (wen)don þæt he sleac wære,
æðeling unfrom. Edwenden cwom
tireadigum menn torna gehwylces. (2183b–89)

[64] Diller excludes this digression according to his own definition, considering it is neither "sequence" nor "events" (p. 82).

> [He had long been disregarded, for the men of the Geats had not reckoned him a man of integrity, nor had the lord of the Weder-Geats been willing to do him much honour on the mead-bench; they had strongly believed that he was indolent, a prince without vigour. There came a turnabout in each one of his troubles for this man blessed with glory.]

The abruptness of this digression has puzzled many critics, and various interpretations of this digression have been offered.[65] Fulk, Bjork, and Niles say that a story of the sluggish youth 'is a commonplace of folk literature', though its introduction here is 'not very convincing'.[66] Bonjour sees the episode as making the contrast between Beowulf and Heremod more conspicuous; the former is an example of 'a poor beginning followed by a prodigious ascent', the latter 'a brilliant promise ending in a miserable downfall'.[67] Irving sees it differently, stating:

> This passage is sometimes taken to mean that Beowulf *was* a lazy, sluggish youth, like young Offa in Saxo Grammaticus, before he suddenly acquired his heroic status, but it says no such thing. It says that the Geats did not reward him because they did not think he was any good as a warrior. Blame for this rests not on Beowulf but on the Geats for being unperceptive.[68]

I also think that the passage may refer to the Geats' views on Beowulf, though I am

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[65] For the scholarly reception of this episode, see Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, note on 2183b ff., p. 236. Norman, E. Eliason suggests that lines 2183b–89 refer to Hygelac, not Beowulf: 'Beowulf's Inglorious Youth', *Studies in Philology*, 76 (1979), 101–08.
[66] Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, note on 2183b ff., p. 236.
[67] Bonjour, Digressions, p. 27.
[68] Edward B. Irving Jr., 'Beowulf Comes Home: Close Reading in Epic Context', in *Acts of Interpretation: The Text in Its Contexts 700-1600: Essays on Medieval and Renaissance Literature in Honor of E. Talbot Donaldson*, ed. by Mary J. Carruthers and Elizabeth D. Kirk (Norman, OK: Pilgrim Books, 1982), pp. 129–43 (p. 136).

not sure if it blames them 'for being unperceptive'; it may simply say that Beowulf was unvalued because he is an unusual hero, not displaying such qualities as promising warriors do. This digression follows 'the implied criticism of others', as Orchard notes.[69]

Swa sceal mæg don,
nealles inwitnet oðrum bregdon
dyrnum cræfte, deað ren(ian)
hondgesteallan. (2166b–69a)

[So ought a kinsman to act, and not weave a web of malice for the other, with concealed cunning, nor devise the death of his close companion.]

… nealles druncne slog
heorðgeneatas; næs him hreoh sefa,
ac he mancynnes mæste cræfte
ginfæstan gife þe him god sealde
heold hildedeor. (2179b–83a)

[…. He [Beowulf] did not strike down his household comrades, being drunk: his was not a savage mind, but rather, he who was ferocious in warfare restrained his strength, the greatest among mankind, the liberal gift which God had bestowed on him.]

Certainly, the first passage (2166b–69a) recalls Hrothulf (and perhaps Unferth) and the second Heremod (2179b–83a). [70] Those Danish warriors are esteemed as

[69] Orchard, *Companion*, p.256.
[70] See Brodeur, '*Beowulf*: One Poem or Three?', p. 16.

powerful warriors at the mead-bench, showing some heroic qualities and some associated vices, which are different from Beowulf's. Unlike those warriors, Beowulf, though strong, is not contentious, savage nor deceptive. Beowulf's unwillingness to contend with other human beings might be wrongly considered as his slackness or inactiveness by other warriors, who hold in high esteem such warriors as Unferth, Hrothulf, or Heremod. Beowulf on the one hand and warriors such as Unferth, Hrothulf and Heremod on the other exemplify different concepts of heroism. This difference comes to the fore in the episode of Breca. Unferth starts with the assumption that the swimming adventure of Beowulf and Breca was a contest, judging it from his point of view (506–28). In Beowulf's version, however, he was not engaging in a competition with Breca:

'… Hæfdon swurd nacod, þa wit on sund reon,
heard on handa; wit unc wið hronfixas
werian þohton. No he wiht fram me
flodyþum feor fleotan meahte,
hraþor on holme, no ic fram him wolde.
Ða wit ætsomne on sæ wæron
fifnihta fyrst, oþ þæt unc flod todraf,
wado weallende, wedera cealdost,
nipende niht, ond norþanwind
heaðogrim ondhwearf; hreo wæron yþa …' (539–48)

['… We had a tough naked sword in our hand as we swam off into the ocean – we intended to protect ourselves against whales. Neither was he at all able to swim away from me, far off on the swelling waves, as being faster in the open sea, nor did I wish to swim away from him. So we remained at sea together for

the duration of five nights until the swell, the surging waters, the most freezing weather and darkening night drove us apart and a north wind fierce as the fray of battle turned upon us …']

Beowulf says that he tries to stay with Breca and in fact they stayed together for five nights. His explanation makes it clear that it was not a swimming contest. The digression 'Beowulf's inglorious youth' is the only digression in the narrative voice among those about the hero's life before he becomes king. It seems to reveal how the Geats judged the hero by their own standards of heroic behaviour. This digression, occurring in the narrative voice, is a less flattering one, and the poet may have thought the facts unlikely to have been repeated by others once Beowulf had become celebrated as a great hero.

There is another problematic element in this digression.[71] It may contradict what he says in lines 408b to 409a ('hæbbe ic mærða fela / ongunnen on geogoþe' [In my youth I have undertaken many famous exploits]), 2426 to 2427a ('Fela ic on giogoðe | guðræsa genæs, /orleghwila' [Many warfaring forays and times of strife I survived in my youth]) or 2511b to 2512a ('Ic geneðde fela / guða on geogoðe' [I ventured into many battles in my youth]). The latter two statements could contradict the digression, if the word 'geogoð' were taken as referring to the period of Beowulf's life before Hygelac rewards him with treasure and estate. It is more likely, however, that the aged king uses the word 'geogoð' here 'in a broad and entirely untechnical sense', as Burrow states.[72] As far as what Beowulf says in lines 408b to 409a concerned, we do not know at what point the monster fights occurred: they may have been

[71] See Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, p. lxiv. They put his 'sluggish' period before the monster fights. Tripp, on the other hand, states that the passage refers to Beowulf's 'altruistic refusal to accept Queen Hygd's offer of the throne after Hygelac's death': 'Did Beowulf Have an "Inglorious Youth"?', *Studia Neophilologica*, 61 (1989), 129–43 (p. 130).
[72] Burrow, *The Ages of Man*, p. 126.

subsequent to what was thought to be his unenterprising boyhood. Another interpretation is possible, if not wholly persuasive. The exploits he has achieved before he goes to Denmark are killing giants or monsters. It is unlikely that Beowulf gained from them any booty which he could present to his lord, even though his strength was acknowledged. Having unusual physical strength and being esteemed in the community may be taken differently. 'Edwenden' can be his chance to show his true courage without contending against other warriors, that is, the adventures in Denmark; and this time, he has gained tremendous rewards. At any rate, the digression seems to emphasise the difference between Beowulf and traditional or typical heroes.

Another digression in the narrative voice, his guardianship of Heardred, Hygelac's son (2369–79a), also features a figure who provides an implicit contrast with Beowulf. The digression is certainly necessary to make it clear how Beowulf becomes a Greatish king, but also serves once again to sharpen the contrast between Beowulf and Hrothulf. Beowulf himself is in the same position in his own country as Hrothulf was in his.[73] In contrast with Wealhtheow, Hygelac's queen Hyde does not have to worry about Beowulf's loyalty to her husband and their son (2169b–71). As Bonjour points out, Hrothulf, as a disloyal nephew, is a perfect foil to Beowulf.[74] Klaeber states that 'it almost looks as if Hrothulf were conceived of as a sort of joint-regent in Denmark', and imagines him as 'the young and daring, a great warrior, a man of energy and ambition'.[75] Though Beowulf's uncle, Hygelac, is young, the situations of Hrothulf and Beowulf are comparable. One can easily imagine that such a nephew to a king might usurp the throne. Having a similar position to Hrothulf,

[73] See Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, footnote 3, p. liii: 'Similarly, uncle and nephew (in this case, the sister's son), namely Hygelac and Beowulf, live together in the land of the Geatas'.
[74] Bonjour, *Digressions*, p. 31. Some critics do not consider that Hrothulf is a traitor. See footnote 71 in Chapter 4; see also Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, note on 1017–19, p. 177.
[75] Klaeber, p. xxxii.

however, Beowulf actually rejects the offer of the throne that the queen makes to him when her husband Hygelac is killed but her son still alive. Beowulf's rejection is all the more striking because we have already heard of Wealhtheow's concern about Hrothulf's ambition. In a sense, Beowulf once again 'transcends' a picture of a typical nephew. Hrothulf himself is not given any active part in the poem, but he plays an important role in giving a sharp contrast to the hero.

Beowulf's regency is certainly related to his life, but it is recounted in the narrative voice only. The reason seems to lie in Bonjour's explanation of why the poet does not give a detailed description of Beowulf's role in Heardred's fatal expedition. Bonjour sees it as 'the poet's care to avoid involving Beowulf, especially as a sovereign, in such intertribal wars'.[76] He surmises that this is because the poet 'wanted to represent his hero as a monster killer, devoted to missions beneficent to all mankind', and explains that the poet 'thus limited his [Beowulf's] action on the plane of ordinary human conflicts to the minimum compatible with his integration into the historical background that he had chosen'.[77] Margaret E. Goldsmith also notes that the poet 'never allows Beowulf to move at the head of an army, or even to slay a human opponent, in any part of the main action' and says that '[t]hese features of his life story must be deliberately suppressed'.[78] Beowulf's fight with Daeghrefn is the only passage in which the hero fights a human opponent.[79] This episode is in the first of the sequential speeches by Beowulf before his dragon fight. Regarding it as the poet's deliberate choice, Bonjour states that it 'may have been kept (or

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[76] Adrien Bonjour, *Twelve 'Beowulf' Papers: 1940–1960 with Additional Comments* (Neuchatel: Faculté Des Lettres, 1962), p. 75.
[77] Bonjour, *Twelve 'Beowulf' Papers*, pp. 81–82.
[78] Margaret E. Goldsmith, 'The Christian Perspective in *Beowulf*', in *Studies in Old English Literature in Honor of Arthur G. Brodeur*, ed. by Stanley B. Greenfield (Eugene: University of Oregon Books, 1963), pp. 71–90 (p. 73).
[79] Goldsmith points out that Beowulf's 'revenge on Dæghrefn for the death of Hygelac is not told as an exciting feat in itself, but as part of the history of the *breostweorðung* which was torn from Hygelac's dead body': 'The Christian Perspective in *Beowulf*', p. 73.

inserted) to illustrate by a single short instance the other aspect of the hero, who could make good as well in ordinary warfare'. Moreover, as I have pointed out, this is a part of his final commitment speech before Beowulf is going to take revenge on the dragon. He kills Daeghrefn to avenge his lord Hygelac. 'Revenge' connects the two situations aptly. As Greenfield notes, 'Beowulf … is intent on revenge as he prepares his attack on the old night-flyer, it is aesthetically suitable and psychologically proper that he single out his revenge on Daeghrefn in talking about Hygelac's Fall'.[80] The digression 'Beowulf's guardianship of Heardred' is without doubt an important part of the hero's life. It seems possible that the poet chose to keep it in the narrative voice to 'minimize' the hero's active participation in human conflicts and military campaigns and thus not to make the digression impinge on the characterization of Beowulf as a peaceful hero which the poet wanted to emphasise.

Unlike the other two, the third digression 'Weohstan's slaying of Eanmund' (2602–25b) is not explicitly relevant to Beowulf's own life, as Kaske notes,[81] though it certainly has narrative significance. The poet mentions Weohstan, Wiglaf's father, before he introduces the first speech by Wiglaf. This digression is necessary to tell us about the speaker's background as well as the origin of his sword.[82] It also fills the gap of the historical account. Ohthere's two sons are mentioned in line 2380b, but only Eadgils (2392b) is referred to there when Beowulf assists him to regain his throne from his uncle Onela. The poet does not tell the fate of the other son of Ohthere, Eanmund, until he introduces his slayer, Weohstan, some two hundred lines later. Moreover, the episode of Weohstan provides a marked contrast with the cowardly retainers. Kaske states: 'The relevance of the passage to its context, then,

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[80] Greenfield, 'Geatish History', p. 215.
[81] R. E. Kaske, 'Weohstan's Sword', *Modern Language Notes*, 75 (1960), 465–68, (p. 466).
[82] Dennis Cronan discusses the thematic significance of the sword: 'The Rescuing Sword', *Neophilologus*, 77 (1993), 467–78.

lies in the parallel between the good retainership of Weohstan and that of his son Wiglaf; and in the contrast between Weohstan and the other retainers, who in an unambiguous situation, involving no ethical peculiarities, abandon their lord in time of need.'[83] By mentioning Weohstan, the poet also gives us another type of a retainer: courageous and loyal, but exiled from his country. The episode thus has its functions in the narrative, but it is still less relevant to the hero's life than the other 'digressions' concerning Geatish history.

To sum up, the speeches which seem to impede the steady advance of the narrative fill in gaps in two ways. One is to amplify the life of Beowulf and the main plot, to leave nothing 'half-illuminated'. In this sense, they are comparable in function with Homer's digressions, but the two poets' ways of accomplishing this are totally different. Homer's digressions are embedded in the main story, while the *Beowulf* poet uses direct speech to fill in the gaps of the narrative and thus gives prominence to the episodes. In Part 1, before the fight with Grendel, digressions in direct speech serves to introduce the hero. In Part 2, digressions help to make the hero a quasi-historical king. The poet at the same time seems to be careful not to present him as a bellicose king. This may be the reason why the digression of his regency, which is apparently an important aspect of his life, does not appear in direct speech, since he is inevitably involved in human feuds during and after his regency. The other function is to fill in the gaps of human qualities that the hero does not have. The speeches by the king and the queen serve to emphasise, through contrasts, not only that Beowulf has such qualities that an ideal retainer or king should have, but also that he is totally devoid of such negative qualities that an ideal retainer or king would not have. In this sense, they serve to supply human traits which cannot be shown through the hero.

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[83] Kaske, *Beowulf*, p. 29.

The third role of the 'reflective' elements in direct speech thus plays an important part in amplifying the information on the hero and the main story. Although they may contribute to the poem's 'lack of steady advance', they contribute at the same time to presenting a clear image of the hero: he is the strongest warrior throughout his days, a loyal kinsman and a thoughtful ruler.

Conclusion

A conclusion which Louviot draws from her survey on direct speech in Old English narrative poems is that 'the attention given to the marking of Direct Speech, textual and otherwise, shows that speeches were seen as important moments in the text'.[84] This conclusion is derived from overall tendencies in Old English narrative poems and seems truer of hagiographic poems, such as *Elene* or *Juliana*. In *Beowulf*, it seems certain that speeches, also carefully marked, are 'important moments', and the poet put essential information in direct speech to give it prominence. But the three great battles of the hero are all the same undoubtedly 'important moments' in the poem, which do not have direct speech at all, and therefore the role of direct speech in the poem, though it follows certain norms in the tradition, is perhaps very different from that in other Old English poems.

In *Beowulf*, direct speech and the narrative voice are interconnected in a complementary way. What is said in the narrative voice is often verified in speeches by characters who have seen or heard it first-hand. This practice seems to reflect the value that Anglo-Saxons placed on first-hand experience as the source of knowledge, and so on the direct information of eyewitnesses.[85] When the characters express commitments, requests or commands, the outcomes are made known in the narrative

[84] Louviot, *Direct Speech*, p. 61.
[85] It is worth noting that 'witen/widsom' and Latin 'videre' are etymologically related: Bloomfield and Dunn, *The Role of the Poet in Early Societies*, p. 112.

later. This relationship between direct speech and the narrative voice is also used for the main story, contributing to the structure of the poem. Beowulf makes a vow which clearly announces the way in which he intends to fight before each battle and then the fighting scene follows, revealing how the hero's intention is accomplished or not accomplished. Each battle is retold by the combatants later as if to provide authoritative first-hand accounts of their experiences.

Direct speech also serves to give information on Beowulf, presenting him as an ideal thane or king; we learn about his life and his character through it. Such information on the hero in direct speech is normally regarded as constituting digressions and episodes and as the main cause for the non-linearity of the poem. This non-linearity seems to be related to the poet's attitude towards story-telling, an attitude that connects the Old English epic to the Homeric epic: nothing is unexplained. In *Beowulf*, however, the digressions and episodes are interwoven in the narrative in a more complex way, inserted in direct speech when they are more contextually appropriate or needed.

What Klaeber says of the 'lack of steady advance' of the poem, that is, 'different parts of a story are sometimes told in different places, or substantially the same incident is related several times from different points of view,' may originate from the subtle way in which the poet uses direct speech.[86]

[86] Klaeber, p. lvii.

Conclusion

The way in which the *Beowulf* poet employs *inquits* to introduce forty-five passages of direct speech suggests that he chose them purposefully. He did not use a great variety of *inquits*, though he must have had more verbs of speech in his language than he uses in his poem. Instead, he limited *inquits* to a small number of common verbs of speech. Nevertheless, those verbs are not used simply synonymously nor interchangeably but in specific senses; and their meanings are overt. What Brodeur observes about the poet's use of compounds seems true of the *inquits* of the poem: they 'are used with more precision, and with more restraint, than those of most other poems.'[1] The examination of the passages that introduce direct speech alone shows that the poet paid much attention to direct speech in the poem.

In addition to his use of *inquits*, other linguistic and metrical features before and after direct speech also support the notion that the poet presents direct speech with great care. The poet always employs either deictic pronouns or present-tense/imperative verbs, or both, in the first two half-lines of every speech, though the strategies the poet uses at the beginning of direct speech are also observed in the other four Old English poems that I used for comparison. As for the resumption of the narrative voice after direct speech, while the linguistic features found in *Beowulf* are again observed in the other Old English poems, one feature which is peculiar to the poem suggests that the *Beowulf* poet was more careful to distinguish direct speech from the narrative. The switching of verb tense or mood between the last clause of direct speech and the first clause of the reopening of the narrative voice is

[1] Brodeur, *Art*, p. 270.

more frequently used to mark off the end of direct speech in *Beowulf* than in the other poems. Moreover, the poet also seems to utilise metre for the demarcation: the onset of both direct speech and the resumption of the narrative consistently begin with unstressed syllables, which might have made narrative segmentation audible.[2] These features all point to the *Beowulf* poet's conscious efforts to make the boundaries between direct speech and the narrative unmistakable.

Furthermore, it is apparent in the *Beowulf* poet's use of the metrical line in relation to direct speech that the speeches in the poem are given 'prominent and rather independent position', as Klaeber points out.[3] Despite the frequent practice of enjambment, almost all speeches in *Beowulf* start and end with the full line.[4] Although there are a few lines which do not start or end at full line junctures, the one case in which a speech ends at the a-verse may well have been caused by a scribal omission of material, while those speeches that start at the beginning of the b-verse always happen 'in the middle of either groups of alternating speeches or sequences of speeches by the same characters'.[5] In fact, all sequential speeches in *Beowulf*, if they are considered as units, start and end with the full line. The poet not only demarcates the speeches from the narrative with various linguistic and metrical devices but also carefully embedded them in the poem. The observable features concerning the presentation of the speeches thus show remarkable consistency throughout the poem. Some critics see the sequential speeches as unstabilising. Bjork says, for example, that 'the interruptions are not so well counterpointed with the speeches themselves… Boundaries loosen, narrative becomes speech, speech

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[2] See Stanley, 'Initial Clusters', p. 270. This is also related to what Putter points out on Chaucer's metre in 'In Appreciation of Metrical Abnormality': 'the lack of an anacrusis usefully signals that we have not in fact embarked on a new sense unit'.

[3] Klaeber, p. lv.

[4] At the end of the a-verse in the text I use, punctuation marks are employed 723 times to indicate the end of an independent clause (full-stops, colons, semi-colons, exclamation marks and question marks).

[5] Handelman, note 8, p. 477.

narrative, as the "patterned behavior" of the poem etched out in part 1 becomes blurred and un-predictable in part 2'.[6] This seems to be referring both to the contents of the speeches and their presentation in Part 2. But I am not convinced that the poet's presentation of sequential speeches supports his inference. Even these interruptions do not occur arbitrarily but show certain similarities, as I have pointed out in Chapter 3. It seems to me that the interrupted speeches are due to the poet's attempt to convey the speaker's sequential actions as a unit.

The distribution of direct speech in the poem is also suggestive; the poet does not use direct speech to describe the battles, and never uses direct speech for collective utterances or the scop's songs. This selectiveness of the allocation of direct speech may indicate that narrative content could be a factor in determining whether they are put in direct speech or not, so that some of them are made more 'prominent' than others. It is possible that Anglo-Saxon poets were selective about what was to be put in direct speech and felt that it was appropriate to represent songs or collective utterances in indirect speech, since strictly speaking this is not realistic. The existence of such possibilities in the world of fiction presupposes literary conventions which plainly were not available to Old English poets.

The examination of the relation between the *inquits* and the contents they introduce also corroborates the notion that the poet uses the *inquits* in specific senses. It is likely, for instance, that the poet did not use the verbs of asking 'frignan' and 'fricgcean' synonymously but distinguished them in meaning. All the speeches introduced by the verb 'maþelode' can be considered to have an official or formal nature. This does not necessarily require the actual presence of many listeners or addressees, but the speaker needs to have a clear identity as a leading member of a community, since it matters who does the talking: words by a person with a certain

[6] Bjork, 'Speech as Gift in Beowulf', p. 1008.

social status serve as credentials.

The speeches in this poem also reflect the value that Anglo-Saxons placed on information by eyewitnesses. In *Beowulf*, direct speech and the narrative interact with each other. What is recounted in the narrative voice is often retold in direct speech as if it were verified by characters who have seen or heard it first-hand. When the characters make commissive or directive statements, the outcomes are always made known in the narrative voice. This relationship between direct speech and the narrative voice is also used in order to advance the main story: Beowulf vows before each battle that he will fight valiantly at the risk of his life, making it clear how he intends to fight and then the fighting scene follows, revealing how the hero's intention is fulfilled or unfulfilled; each battle is retold by the hero (or Wiglaf in the case of the last fight), as a first-hand report.

In her conclusion to *Direct Speech in 'Beowulf' and Other Old English Narrative Poems*, Louviot asserts that if direct speech in Old English poems is seen 'as a way of telling a story more strikingly, then it appears as the wonderfully versatile and effective device it truly is'.[7] If direct speech in *Beowulf* is to be interpreted as such, then it should be seen as a truly significant component in the narrative; speeches are not subordinated to the main plot, that is, the great fights of the hero, but they share an equal position with it.

What aspect of the narrative then did the *Beowulf* poet want to make prominent in his speeches? I think that it is certainly the unusual character of the hero Beowulf.[8] As Peter Clemoes says, 'the hero *is* the poem'.[9] There is much in the

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[7] Louviot, *Direct Speech*, p. 252.

[8] See Constance B. Hieatt, 'Beowulf's Last Words vs. Bothvar Bjarki's: How the Hero Faces His God', in *Heroic Poetry in the Anglo-Saxon Period: Studies in Honor of Jess B. Bessinger, Jr.*, ed. by Helen Damico and John Leyerle, Studies in Medieval Culture, 32 (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1993), pp. 403–24. She points out: 'The qualities that distinguish Beowulf are rarely to be found in the heroes of edda and saga' (p. 405).

[9] Clemoes, 'Action in *Beowulf* and Our Perception of It', p. 167.

narrative voice that we can learn about the hero without direct speech. We do not require direct speech, for example, to see his prowess: we can see in action how Beowulf, as a young thane of the Geatish king Hygelac, gains honour by fighting the monsters for the Danes and how he, as an old king, faces his death valiantly by fighting the deadly dragon for his own people. But the direct speech foregrounds other qualities. Through direct speech, the poet emphasises Beowulf's kind consideration of others and his eagerness to help people in need, and because kindness is not so easily represented in epic action the poet, when reiterating this quality in the last lines of the poem, still makes it the subject of a verb of speech (though we have now fittingly faded into indirect speech and into past tense):[10]

> cwædon þæt he wære wyruldcyning[a]
> manna mildust ond mon(ðw)ærust,
> leodum liðost ond lofgeornost. (3180–82)
>
> [They said that among the kings of this world he had been the most compassionate of men, and the most humane, the most kindly to his people and the most eager for good repute.]

As a thane, Beowulf avoids human feud; the king Beowulf does not start war needlessly though he is inevitably drawn into the feuds with Frisians and Swedes. This may be why the poet made use of fabulous enemies to represent the hero's courage and strength: he did not include scenes in which his hero goes out to kill other humans to gain his own honour. He is a unique hero.[11] There appear many

[10] This fading out is typical of closure in traditional stories. See Axel Olrik, 'Epic Laws of Folk Narrative', in *The Study of Folklore*, ed. by Alan Dundes (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1965), 129–41 (p. 132).

[11] On the uniqueness of his character, see, for example, Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, the section 'The pagan hero as spiritual warrior', pp. lxxviii–lxxix; Thomas D. Hill, 'The Confession of Beowulf and the Structure of *Volsunga Saga*', in *The Vikings*, ed. by

brave warriors in the poem: Hrothgar, Hrothulf, Unferth, Heremod, Sigemund, Hygelac, Weohstan, Onegentheow, or Onela. They are all excellent warriors but not without faults. Those characters, embodying a variety of valiant heroes, all seem to act as a foil for the ideal hero Beowulf, serving to make his humanities more prominent. Although he may be rather exceptional, people seemed to have been aware of the price of a hero king, as is seen in *Gilgamesh*, the oldest epic story, where the hero Gilgamesh, who is considered as a historic person, is depicted as courageous but arrogant.[12] The final lines of *Beowulf* are a perfect recapitulation of the character of the hero that the poet presents through direct speech.

Lastly, I would like to return to the notable peculiarities that the verb 'maþelode' has. As has been noted, the verb is always used in the third-person singular preterite form and never used in the plural form or the present tense in Old English poetry; it always introduces direct speech and is never used to introduce indirect speech. These peculiarities may be explained by its etymological sense: 'to make a formal speech in front of the assembly': it introduces a speech that acts as a formal declaration or record which could be transmitted. Moreover, as McConchie notes, the 'maþelode' formula 'almost always begins a sentence'.[13] In fact, the verb always appears in the second stressed position (lift) of the a-verse. It is notable that no other *inquit* in finite form appears in this position in *Beowulf*. In other Old English poetry, those common *inquits*, 'frægn', 'andswarode', 'cwæð', 'spræc' and 'sægde' are sometimes placed in the second lift in the a-verse. In addition, no other verse in *Beowulf* has the same metrical pattern, Sx/Ssx, with single alliteration in the a-verse.[14] These

Robert T. Farrell (London: Phillimore, 1982), pp. 165–79.

[12] *The Epic of Gilgamesh: An English Version with an Introduction*, trans. by N. K. Sandars, rev. edn (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), pp. 20–23 and 62.

[13] McConchie, p.59.

[14] See Bliss, p. 49 and Appendix C; John C. Pope, *The Rhythm of 'Beowulf': An Interpretation of the Normal and Hypermetric Verse-Forms in Old English Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942), p. 312. This type usually requires double alliteration. Terasawa ascribes it to metrical heaviness (p. 42).

characteristics certainly serve to make the verse aurally conspicuous when it is used frequently. Sounding like a trumpet fanfare, it notifies us of the coming of important speeches which contain official or formal declarations. This would not work if the *Beowulf* poet simply used the *inquit* 'maþelode' in the same way in which Homer uses Greek *inquit* formulae. Anglo-Saxons, who knew that the verb meant more than 'spoke', would have responded differently when they heard the formula. According to Rissanen: 'The days of *maþelian* are numbered when the society characterized by speech and recital gradually changes into one leaning more on writing and literacy.'[15] I think his suggestion is right, and the demise of the verb 'maþelian' may indicate that the value of oral testimony in the society had declined as well.

[15] Rissanen, '*Maþelian* in Old English Poetry', p. 171.

Appendix 1

Direct speech in *Beowulf*

Passage	Lines (length)	Speaker	To whom	Verbs of speaking	Circumstances preceding the speech(s)
1	237 ~ 257 (21)	the coastguard, a thane of Hrothgar	Beowulf and his men	'meþelwordum **frægn**' (236b)	The coastguard rides to the shore when Beowulf and his men arrives at the land of the Danes.
2	260 ~ 285 (26)	Beowulf	the coastguard	'**andswarode**' (258b); '**wordhord onleac**' (259b)	
3	287b ~ 300 (13.5)	the coastguard	Beowulf	'Weard **maþelode**' (286a)	
4	316 ~ 319 (4)	the coastguard	Beowulf	'word æfter **cwæð**' (315b)	The coastguard leads them toward the hall and returns to the shore.
5	333 ~ 339 (7)	the messenger (Wulfgar)	Beowulf	'æfter æþelum **frægn**' (332b)	Beowulf reaches the entrance to the hall and meets the messenger, Wulfgar.
6	342b ~ 347 (5.5)	Beowulf	Wulfgar	'**andswarode**' (340b); 'word æfter **spræc**' (341b)	
7	350b ~ 355 (5.5)	Wulfgar	Beowulf	'Wulfgar **maþelode**' (348a)	
8	361 ~ 370 (10)	Wulfgar	Hrothgar	'Wulfgar **maðelode**' (360a)	Wulfgar goes to see Hrothgar in the hall.
9	372 ~ 389a (17.5)	Hrothgar	Wulfgar	'Hroðgar **maþelode** | helm Scyldinga' (371)	
10	391 ~ 398 (8)	Wulfgar	Beowulf	'Word inne **abead**' (390b)	Wulfgar comes back to the hall door.
11	407 ~ 455 (49)	Beowulf	Hrothgar	'Beowulf **maðelode**' (405a)	Beowulf goes inside the hall.

12	457 ~ 490 (34)	Hrothgar	Beowulf	'Hroðgar **maþelode** | helm Scyldinga' (456)	Beowulf joins the feast.
13	506 ~ 528 (23)	Unferth	Beowulf	'Unferð **maþelode** | Ecglafes bearn' (499); '**onband beadurune**' (501a)	Unferth, courtier of Hrothgar, sits by the side of the king.
14	530 ~ 606 (77)	Beowulf	Unferth	'Beowulf **maþelode** | bearn Ecgþeowes' (529)	
15	632 ~ 638 (7)	Beowulf	Wealhtheow	'**gyddode**' (630a); 'Beowulf **maþelode** | bearn Ecgþeowes' (631)	Beowulf receives the cup Wealhtheow has carried.
16	655 ~ 661 (7)	Hrothgar	Beowulf	'ond **þæt word acwæð**' (654b)	Hrothgar is leaving the hall to go to bed.
17	677 ~ 687 (11)	Beowulf	His men	'**Gespræc** þa se goda | **gylpworda sum**' (675)	Beowulf goes to bed.
18	928 ~ 956 (29)	Hrothgar	Beowulf	'Hroðgar **maþelode**' (925a)	Hrothgar comes to the entrance of the hall to see the outcome of the battle.
19	958 ~ 979 (22)	Beowulf	Hrothgar	'Beowulf **maþelode** | bearn Ecþeowes' (957)	Beowulf meets Hrothgar.
20	1169 ~ 1187 (19)	Wealhtheow	Hrothgar and Hrothulf	'**Spræc** ða ides Scyldinga' (1168b)	Wealhtheow carries a cup to Hrothgar at the feast in the hall.
21	1216 ~ 1231 (16)	Wealhtheow	Beowulf	'Wealhðeo **maþelode**, | heo fore þæm werede **spræc**' (1215)	Beowulf receives a cup and gifts from Wealhtheow.
22	1322 ~ 1382 (61)	Hrothgar	Beowulf	'Hroðgar **maþelode** | helm Scyldinga' (1321)	Hrothgar calls Beowulf
23	1384 ~ 1396 (13)	Beowulf	Hrothgar	'Beowulf **maþelode** | bearn Ecgþeowes' (1383)	

24	1474 ~ 1491 (18)	Beowulf	Hrothgar	'Beowulf **maþelode** | bearn Ecgþeowes' (1473)	Beowulf is about to plunge into the water.
25	1652 ~ 1676 (25)	Beowulf	Hrothgar	'Beowulf **maþelode** | bearn Ecgþeowes' (1651)	Beowulf comes back to the hall with the head of Grendel.
26	1700 ~ 1784 (85)	Hrothgar	Beowulf	'Hroðgar **maþelode**' (1687a); 'Ða se wisa **spræc**' (1698b)	Hrothgar receives the hilt of the ancient sword with which Beowulf has beheaded Grendel.
27	1818 ~ 1839 (22)	Beowulf	Hrothgar	'Beowulf **maþelode** | bearn Ecgþeowes' (1817)	Beowulf goes to greet Hrothgar before leaving his land.
28	1841 ~ 1865 (25)	Hrothgar	Beowulf	'Hroðgar **maþelode** | him on andsware' (1840)	
29	1987 ~ 1998 (12)	Hygelac	Beowulf	'Higelac **ongan**…fægre **fricgcean**' (1983b-1985a)	Beowulf greets Hygelac and is seated beside him.
30a	2000 ~ 2151 (152)	Beowulf	Hygelac	'Biowulf **maðelode** | bearn Ecgðioes' (1999)	
30b	2047 ~ 2056 (10)	an old warrior	a young soldier	'…**cwið**…ond þæt word **acwyð**' (2041a-2046b)	Freawaru comes into the hall as a bride.
31	2155 ~ 2162 (8)	Beowulf	Hygelac	'**gyd** æfter **wræc**' (2154b)	Beowulf orders the treasure he has got at Hrothgar's hall to be carried.
32	2247 ~ 2266 (20)	the keeper of the hoard, the last survivor	the earth	'fea worda **cwæð**' (2246b)	The Last Survivor hides treasures in the hoard.
33	2426 ~ 2509 (84)	Beowulf	his companions	'Biowulf **maþelade** | bearn Ecgðeowes' (2425)	Beowulf is with his companions on the headland before going to fight with the dragon.

34	2511b ~ 2515 (4.5)	Beowulf	his companions	'Beowulf **maðelode**, | beotwordum **spræc**' (2510)	Beowulf is with his companions on the headland before going to fight with the dragon.
35	2518b ~ 2537 (19.5)	Beowulf	his companions	'**Gegrette** ða | gumena gehwylcne' (2516)	
36	2633 ~ 2660 (28)	Wiglaf	his companions	'Wiglaf **maðelode** | wordrihta fela **sægde** gesiðum' (2631-2632a)	Wiglaf, waiting with the other men, decides to go to help Beowulf.
37	2663 ~ 2668 (6)	Wiglaf	Beowulf	'fea worda **cwæð**' (2662b)	Wiglaf comes to help Beowulf.
38	2729 ~ 2751 (23)	Beowulf	Wiglaf	'Biowulf **maþelode** | he ofer benne **spræc**' (2724)	Beowulf & Wiglaf beats the dragon.
39	2794 ~ 2808 (15)	Beowulf	Wiglaf	'oð þæt **wordes ord breosthord þurhbræc**' (2791b, 2792a) [2792b is missing.]	Wiglaf comes back with some treasure which Beowulf has asked him to bring.
40	2813 ~ 2816 (4)	Beowulf	Wiglaf	'**het** hyne brucan well' (2812b)	Beowulf give his treasures to Wiglaf.
41	2864 ~ 2891 (28)	Wiglaf	his companions	'Wiglaf **maðelode** | Weohstanes sunu' (2862a)	The other companions finally come to the fighting place.
42	2900 ~ 3027 (128)	the messenger	the contingent of soldiers	'ac he soðlice | **sægde** ofer ealle' (2899)	The messenger comes to the encampment on the sea cliff.
43	3077 ~ 3109 (33)	Wiglaf	his companions / soldiers	'Wiglaf **maðelode** | Wihstanes sunu' (3076)	The soldiers come to the fighting place.
44	3114b ~ 3119 (5.5)	Wiglaf	his companions / soldiers	'**Het** ða gebeodan' (3110a)	

Appendix 2

Types of formality in the speeches introduced by 'maþelode'

Scene	Speech	Addresser	Social Status	Addressee(s)	Type of Formality
1	287b–300	Coastguard	Hrothgar's official, coastguard	Beowulf	judgement, permission, commitment
	350b–55	Wulfgar	Hrothgar's official, herald	Beowulf	judgement, commitment
	361–70	Wulfgar	Hrothgar's official	Hrothgar	request or advice
	372–89a	Hrothgar	King	Wulfgar	permission
	407–55	Beowulf	Hygelac's thane, Geatish prince	Hrothgar	greetings, offer
	457–90	Hrothgar	King	Beowulf	greetings, invitation to the feast
2	506–28	Unferth	Hrothgar's thane, spokesman (?)	Beowulf	questioning
	530–606	Beowulf	Hygelac's thane	Unferth	rebuttal, report
	632–38	Beowulf	Hygelac's thane	Wealhtheow	commitment, pledge
3	928–956	Hrothgar	King	Beowulf	praise
	958–79	Beowulf	Hygelac's thane	Hrothgar	report
	1216–31	Wealhtheow	Queen	Beowulf	reward
4	1322–82	Hrothgar	King	Beowulf	lamentation, report
	1384–96	Beowulf	Hygelac's thane	Hrothgar	commitment
	1474–91	Beowulf	Hygelac's thane	Hrothgar	pledge
	1652–76	Beowulf	Hygelac's thane	Hrothgar	report
	1700–84	Hrothgar	King	Beowulf	praise, advice
	1818–39	Beowulf	Hygelac's thane	Hrothgar	word of farewell, promise
	1841–65	Hrothgar	King	Beowulf	praise, word of farewell
5	2000–2151	Beowulf	Hygelac's thane	Hygelac	report, tribute
6	2426–2509	Beowulf	King	his companions	commitment
	2511b–15	Beowulf	King	his companions	pledge
	2633–60	Wiglaf	Beowulf's thane and kinsman	his companions	commitment
	2729–51	Beowulf	King	Wiglaf	last injunction or will
7	2864–91	Wiglaf	Beowulf's thane	his companions	report
	3077–3109	Wiglaf	Beowulf's thane	his companions / soldiers	report, commitment

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